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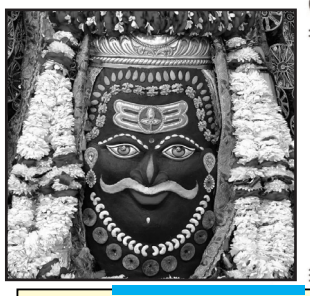
SATURDAY

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Must unite society against divisive forces; inspire citizens towards self-reliance: PM Modi

New Delhi . (Agency).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday called for collective efforts to tackle emerging societal ills and new challenges, unite society against divisive forces and inspire citizens to become self-reliant.Inaugurating the Chinmaya Amrit Mahotsav Global Sammelan, Modi said the Chinmaya Mission was not merely an institution but a thought, with "Chinmaya" signifying pure consciousness. Founded by the sage Swami Chinmayananda, the Mission's journey over the decades had also been guided by divine resolve, he said.

"Over the past decades, times have changed, new challenges have emerged before the country, and new societal ills have surfaced. Today, the responsibility of solving them rests upon all of us," Modi said."We must unite society against the forces that seek to divide us. We must make our citizens aware and inspired towards self-reliance. We must connect every individual with the resolve of a Developed India by 2047. For these objectives, we must become even more proactive," he added.The Prime Minister said India was the birthplace of its culture and the foundation of the nation's existence.

Amit Shah raps Rahul's 'negative politics', says protests won't achieve anything

New Delhi (Agency).

Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday targeted Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his absence from the country as the Opposition protested against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over alleged irregularities in the SIR of electoral rolls and claims of vote theft.

Speaking at an event in outer Delhi to launch and inaugurate 33 Delhi Jal Board (DJB) projects worth Rs 8,941 crore, Shah said that the Congress would remain out of power for the next 30 years because of its "negative politics"."When I say BJP will be in power for 30 years, they again reiterate allegations of vote theft... I want to tell you that Amit Shah was born here, stays here, and will die here... I don't need to visit foreign countries every six months. You won't form government for 30 years, based on your negative politics," he said.Shah also took a swipe at the Congress leader over his reported four-day trip to Vietnam, which coincided with nationwide anti-SIR protests."I know you can't hear me, you're sitting somewhere abroad. You don't even explain why, but that's okay, that's your personal life... But once you land in Delhi, listen to me; your turn won't come for the next 30 years," Shah said.

Accusing Gandhi of bringing party workers from other states to Delhi for protests, Shah said the opposition could not overturn the mandate given to BJP by voters. "Crores of BJP workers and PM Narendra Modi exist among people, understand their concerns and work continuously to solve them," he said.

Sting operation attempt on me, Kerala CM with Meta glasses: DK Shivakumar's explosive claim

Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar made an explosive claim amid the ongoing sting operation row involving former CM Siddaramaiah. DKS alleged that an industrialist wearing Meta smart glasses attempted to secretly record him and Kerala Congress CM VD Satheesan.

New Delhi (Agency).

Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar alleged a sting operation was attempted on him and Kerala Chief Minister VD Satheesan, both Congress leaders, and not on Bharatiya Janata Party or its NDA allied chief ministers. The claims made in an interview with a Kannada broadcaster added a fresh twist to the political storm over sting operations in Karnataka.DK Shivakumar (DKS) claimed that an industrialist who came to meet him wore Meta smart glasses that raised his suspicions, prompting him to seek information about the visitor's movements and meetings with other political leaders.In an interview with Kannada broadcaster Asianet Suvarna News, the Karnataka CM alleged that the episode was part of preparations for a wider sting operation targeting him and other Congress leaders.DKS made these allegations amid an escalating row over purported sting-operation videos linked to former Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, with the Congress and opposition parties trading allegations over who was behind these, and its political purpose.Asked why no action had been taken against those who allegedly tried to trap him, DKS said the authorities had taken precautions but were not disclosing the details."Who said



action wasn't sought? You just don't know, that's all. We are not disclosing it, that's all. We have taken all precautionary measures," the Karnataka CM said in an interview with Asianet Suvarna News.

META GLASSES RAISED SUSPICIONS OF STING OP ATTEMPT: DK SHIVAKUMAR

Recounting the alleged attempt, DKS said an industrialist had secured an appointment through officials and initially discussed business with him. The visitor, however, subsequently shifted the conversation towards politics, speaking about booth-level strategies and political developments.DKS said the change in conversation, along with the glasses the visitor wore, made him suspicious. "I asked my officials to conduct a small enquiry on the background of the industrialist," DKS said.According to the Karnataka CM, the information he received suggested that the visitor had worn the same Meta glasses during a meeting with Kerala CM VD Satheesan, but not while meeting Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and a Union minister."He wore the Meta glasses only when he came to me and [VD] Satheesan," DKS claimed.He did not identify the visitor or provide verifiable evidence of the alleged recording attempt during the interview.DKS said he had received information about people who could be involved and had warned.

Material submitted a week ago: Robert Vadra questions action on son's exhibition

Robert Vadra, in an exclusive conversation with India Today, called the last-minute removal of nearly two-thirds of son Raihan's photographs from his Bikaner House exhibition "intimidation", questioning why objections were raised hours before its opening despite the proposal being submitted a week earlier.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Robert Vadra on Friday questioned the Bikaner House administration's decision to remove photographs from his son Raihan Vadra's exhibition just hours before it was due to open, asking why objections were raised at the last minute despite the proposal being submitted a week in advance.Calling the last-minute intervention "intimidation", Vadra, in an exclusive conversation with India Today, said the administration had failed to scrutinise the photographs in time and left his son scrambling to dismantle parts of the show.Vadra said Raihan had exhibited at Bikaner House for six years and had followed the established procedure of submitting a PDF of the proposed exhibits in advance. He questioned why the photographs were not scrutinised earlier."Why was there no



objection at that time? Why are you telling us at 9 o'clock?" he said.The controversy erupted after Raihan, an artist and photographer and the son of Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Robert Vadra, said several photographs depicting recent Delhi protests, including images featuring the national flag, were ordered to be removed from his solo exhibition, No Idea Is Final, at Bikaner House.Vadra said the objections came only after Raihan had begun setting up the exhibition and inviting guests for a preview. He said the administration had failed to conduct its due diligence despite having a week to review the proposal.Vadra also questioned why around 75 photographs (nearly 2/3 of the exhibition) were marked for removal instead of the administration identifying specific images that violated its policy.

According to Vadra, the administration did not provide a clear explanation for its objections. He said his son had offered to turn around the photographs in question rather than display them, but the response was that the pictures had to be removed.

Punjab Hit As Over 3 Lakh Government Employees, Roadways Workers On Strike

Chandigarh (Agency).

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann is facing an increasing revolt from government employees, with over 3 lakh staff taking mass casual leave and contractual roadways workers extending their strike indefinitely. The twin protests have disrupted bus services and work in government offices, piling pressure on the Aam Aadmi Party government as it heads for the 2027 Assembly elections.The continuing strike by the Punjab Roadways, PUNBUS and PRTC Contract Workers' Union has affected bus services across the state. Negotiations have failed to produce a breakthrough. Employee representatives met Chief Secretary KAP Sinha at 4 pm on Thursday after the government released the minutes of an earlier meeting with Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, as demanded by the unions. The meeting, however, remained inconclusive after nearly two hours of negotiations.

Sukhchain Singh Khaira, coordinator of the Joint Action Committee leading the agitation, said work across government offices, including directorates, had been affected.Subsequently, a 39-member delegation representing employees and pensioners met officials but said it received no clear assurance on several demands. One contentious issue concerned temporary teachers described as being regularised. According to employee representatives, the government clarified that they had been given "tenure" rather than regular employee status carrying the financial benefits available to regular employees.The employees are demanding the release of pending dearness allowance (DA) instalments and arrears, restoration of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS), regularisation of contractual staff, revision.

2 Election Commissioners Complained Against Senior Panel Officer, RTI Shows

New Delhi (Agency).

In an unusual escalation of differences within the Election Commission of India (ECI), two Election Commissioners, Dr. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Dr. Vivek Joshi, wrote separate letters to Cabinet Secretary TV Somanathan on July 29, 2026, objecting to the conduct of a senior Commission official and seeking appropriate action, records released under the Right to Information (RTI) Act show.The letters, addressed to the Cabinet Secretary, concerned senior Deputy Election Commissioner Maneesh Garg and an order he issued revising the allocation of work among



senior officers. The two Commissioners alleged that the changes were made without prior discussion with the Commission or the officers concerned.

The development comes amid questions about differences within the poll body. The Indian Express reported on September 23 that two Election Commissioners had objected on record 14 times in 10 months to steps involving the addition of new voters and deletion of names from electoral rolls, and had approached the Cabinet Secretary over concerns about the integrity of the voter database.The correspondence disclosed under this RTI application, however, relates to the separate issue of work allocation.In his letter, Sandhu said Garg was assigned additional charge of the Administration Division.

RSS To Hold Key National Meeting In Indore From November 2 To 4

New Delhi (Agency).

The annual Akhil Bharatiya Karyakari Mandal Baithak of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) will be held in Madhya Pradesh's Indore, from November 2 to 4."The three-day meeting will take place in Indore -- Malwa Prant on



Yugabda 5128, corresponding to Vikram Samvat 2083 (Kartik Krishna Ashtami, Navami and Dashami)," a press note said on Thursday."RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat, General Secretary (Sarkaryavah) Dattatreya Hosabale, all six Sah-Sarkaryavahs (Joint General Secretaries), other all-India departmental heads and members of the national executive will participate in the deliberations," it added.

Office-bearers from the organisation's entire structure are expected to attend. This includes Prant (province) Sanghchalaks (Chiefs), Karyavahs (secretaries) and Pracharaks (workers), along with their Sah-level counterparts, from all 46 prants.Similarly, Sanghchalaks, Karyavahs and Pracharaks, together with Sah-Kshetra level functionaries, from all 11 kshetras will also be present.The meeting assumes significance as it comes after the conclusion of the series of programmes organised across the country during the Sangh's centenary year, which ended with the recent Vijayadashami celebrations.

The "Baithak" (meeting) will discuss follow-up action on the important issues raised by RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat in his Vijayadashami address this year.

Speaker Sets Deadline For Decision On AIADMK Rebel MLAs Who Joined Vijay's TVK

Chennai(Agency).

The Tamil Nadu Assembly Speaker has drawn up a timeline to conclude proceedings on disqualification petitions against six former AIADMK MLAs who switched to the ruling TVK, with final arguments scheduled for November 17, according to an exclusive document accessed by .

The schedule comes after the Madras High Court recently directed the Speaker to conclude the disqualification proceedings within two months.According to the schedule signed by Assembly Additional Secretary P Thenmozhi on October 17, the final submission of rejoinders, further replies and documents, if any, by the petitioners and respondents is due on October 26. Proof affidavits or affidavits of evidence must be submitted by both sides on November 2.Cross-examination of witnesses from both sides is scheduled for November 10, 11 and



12, in the presence of their respective advocates. Final arguments will be heard on November 17, with orders to be pronounced thereafter. The schedule does not specify a date for the final order.The proceedings stem from a trust vote in which 25 AIADMK MLAs defied their party whip and voted in favour of the minority TVK government. While 19 subsequently expressed regret, prompting the AIADMK to withdraw its disqualification petitions against them, the remaining six chose to resign and immediately join the ruling TVK.

There is a further technical distinction in the case. Dr R Vijayabaskar and M R Vijayabaskar were also technically pardoned but chose to switch sides. This could mean the proceedings may ultimately have implications for only four of the six MLAs, depending on how the matter is treated.The defections triggered allegations.

AIADMK has sought disqualification of six former AIADMK MLAs who switched to the ruling TVK. Speaker has set November 17 date for final argument.

marry': FIR against man for abetting suicide of forensic science student

Noida.(Agency)

A Kanpur resident has been booked for abetment of suicide after an 18-year-old forensic science student allegedly died by suicide at a relative's house in Sarfabad village near Sector 113 on May 14, police said on Thursday.

A team is being formed to arrest the suspect in Kanpur, while police are trying to retrieve data from the woman's seized iPhone.A native of Kanpur Dehat, the woman was pursuing a forensic science course at a university in Mathura. She was staying at the relative's house to appear for an examination, police said.In his complaint, her father alleged that the suspect sexually and mentally harassed her and was also pressuring her to marry him. He also alleged that the man had introduced himself as a political party leader.

Checks find 2 senior officials absent from office, MCG serves notices

Gurgaon.(Agency)

MCG has issued show-cause notices to two senior officials after a surprise inspection at 11.30am on Wednesday allegedly found them absent from their offices without prior approval or intimation.

According to the notices issued to an additional commissioner and an executive engineer on Wednesday, MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya took exception to the absence of the two officials, stating that neither had informed him or obtained permission beforehand. The notices describe the conduct as a potential lapse in due diligence and a disregard for official discipline.

"Notices have been issued to the two senior officials because they were not present in the office on Wednesday," a senior MCG official said. Both officials have been directed to submit written explanations within three days of receiving their respective notices.In the notice to the additional commissioner, Dahiya said such laxity was not expected from a senior Haryana civil services (HCS) officer. The conduct was described, prima facie, as showing a "lack of due diligence" and "disregard for official discipline".

The notice to the executive engineer states that if his explanation is not received within the stipulated period, it will be presumed that he has nothing to state in his defence, and further action may be considered under the applicable rules without another notice.

Two men fire shots at retired Sub-Inspector's home

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Two men fired shots at the house of a retired Haryana Police sub-inspector in Nagla Enclave Part-II, Faridabad around 2am Thursday, while his family was asleep inside.

CCTV footage of the incident shows the two men approaching the house on foot, opening fire and fleeing on a motorcycle. It recorded one of the men, wearing a blue T-shirt with a yellow cotton towel wrapped around his head, pulling out a gun and firing first towards the house. The other man, dressed in a white shirt, then took out a firearm and attempted to fire. After a brief pause, the man with the towel steps back and fires again before discharging a third shot into the air.

One bullet hit the wall, and a windowpane was shattered. CCTV footage also shows the man in the white shirt picking up spent bullet casings from the ground and putting them in his pocket before the duo fled.

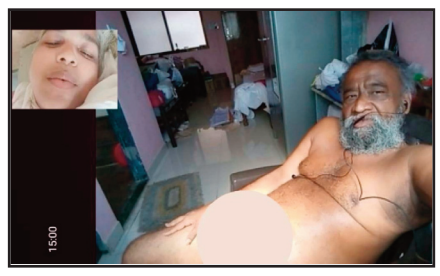
Serious Allegations Against Jain Monk Sagar Chandra Sagar Raise Questions Over Religious Accountability

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Ahmedabad / Madhya Pradesh: According to claims circulating online, Sagar Chandra Sagar has been accused of inappropriate conduct involving female Jain ascetics. Questions have also been raised regarding alleged financial irregularities and the use of donations collected in the name of religious activities.However, these allegations have not been independently verified. The authenticity and context of material reportedly circulating online must be established through a fair investigation, and no individual should be considered guilty without credible evidence and due legal process.Questions Over Religious InstitutionsThe controversy has brought renewed attention to ac



countability within religious or ganizations and the protection of women who dedicate their lives to religious service.Community leaders and religious institutions must ensure that complaints of misconduct are ad dressed transparently and fairly. Any



credible allegations of exploitation, abuse, or financial wrongdoing should be referred to the appropriate authorities for investigation.The issue also raises concerns about maintaining public trust in religious institutions that are expected to uphold principles of truth, non-violence, discipline, and renunciation.Abhay Chopra's Role Under DiscussionThe material provided for this report also identifies Abhay Chopra as a media adviser associated with Sagar Chandra Sagar. According to the claims, Chopra has disputed reports concerning the individual and circulated responses challenging their accuracy.The matter raises questions about how representatives of religious figures respond to media scrutiny. All parties should be given a fair opportunity to present their positions, while journalists should be able to investigate matters of legitimate public interest without intimidation.Claims concerning financial dealings, improper influence, or attempts to suppress reporting require documentary evidence and independent verification before they can be presented as facts.

When Everything Has Gone Online, Who Can a Person Share Their Feelings With?

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Rupesh Solanki A great deal has changed in human life in the modern age. Messages have replaced handwritten letters, video calls have taken the place of face-to-face meetings, online shopping has replaced visits to markets, and sending emojis on social media has become a common way of expressing emotions. Technology has made life easier, but amid this convenience, a question is gradually emerging: Have people truly come closer to one another, or have they merely become closer to their screens?Today, people have the convenience of communicating with someone sitting in any corner of the world, yet they often have no time to talk to someone sitting right beside them at home. Thousands of contacts are stored on mobile phones, but finding someone with whom one can share personal feelings without hesitation has become difficult. Pictures of happiness are posted on social media, but hardly anyone has the time to understand the sadness hidden behind those very photographs.There was a time when family members would gather in the courtyard as evening approached. They would share the experiences of the day, laughter would fill the atmosphere, and the wisdom of elders would offer valuable lessons about life. Today, everyone may be together at home, yet each person remains confined to a separate world within a screen. Even people living under the same roof can gradually become distant from one another. This distance cannot be measured in kilometres, because it is a distance between hearts and emotions.Technology is not bad. It is an excellent tool that makes human life more convenient. The problem arises when, instead of technology serving our time and needs, we begin to live according to its demands. A mobile phone should remain in our hands, not take control of our relationships and emotions.We should occasionally ask ourselves how many hours we spend on our mobile phones each day and how many minutes we devote to listening carefully to our family members. We read someone's message immediately, yet we often take too long to recognise the sadness in the eyes of the person sitting right in front of us. This is one of the strange realities of modern



life.Keeping relationships alive does not require expensive gifts or grand celebrations. Listening to someone patiently, spending a little time with elders, laughing wholeheartedly with children, and calling a friend during difficult times to ask, "How are you really doing?"** — these small gestures hold great meaning in life.We should learn new technologies, move forward in the digital world, and adapt to changing times. However, we must not lose our humanity, warmth, and emotions in the process.

FIR against dandiya organisers for playing loud music after 10pm

Noida.(Agency)

An FIR has been registered against the organisers of a dandiya programme at Wave City after DJ music allegedly continued beyond 10 pm on Oct 18 despite a police warning. The event was held behind T-7 clubhouse at Dream Homes Society. A resident called the Dial 112 police helpline more than five times over the high volume, following which police asked the organisers to lower it. They allegedly resumed playing music at high volume after cops left, forcing the complainant and her partner to move to a hotel room.

Police said a resident of Dream Homes Society, Asaweri Meenakshi, who works at a multinational company, filed a complaint. She told the cops that she and her partner, Prashant Mishra, had to work till late at night. She said the organisers were holding a dandiya night event when they had permission for a jagran during Navaratri. Mishra allegedly went to the venue and requested the organisers to lower the volume, but they misbehaved with him.She raised five complaints through the helpline. Each time police arrived, the organisers lowered the volume, raising it again after they left. She also told the police the DJ allegedly played vulgar songs that hurt her religious sentiments. "It affected my physical and mental health. I was helpless as I had to finish my work, so we left our flat and stayed at a hotel that night," she said.

Permissible ambient noise limits are 75 dB(A) during the day and 70 dB(A) at night in industrial areas. The limits are 65 dB(A) during the day and 55 dB(A) at night in commercial areas, and 55 dB(A) and 45 dB(A), respectively, in residential areas. In silence zones, covering areas within 100 metres of hospitals, educational institutions and courts, the limits are 50 dB(A) during the day and 40 dB(A) at night.

Typically, DJ music ranges between 95 and 105 dB(A), which is way higher than the limit permissible in a residential area.SHO of Wave City police station Shelendra Singh Tomar said several residents called the police and complained about the high-volume songs after 10 pm on Oct 18. However, only Asaweri Meenakshi filed a complaint, and on its basis.

Ghaziabad gets 3 Ranney wells to meet supply shortage as Gangajal supply suspended till Nov

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

As the Ganga water supply remains suspended for a month for annual desilting, the civic body has made three Ranney wells operational along Hindon to supply 21 million litres per day (MLD) of water to areas including Karhera and Arthala.

Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation (GMC) water works department general manager KP Anand said six wells have been dug along Hindon banks to tap the aquifer, but only three could be made functional, each well with a capacity to supply 7 MLD of treated water.

Officials said water drawn from the wells, which also collect rainwater, was treated with chlorine and other methods before being supplied to nearby areas. GMC was also in talks with UP Jal Nigam and the irrigation department to build more such wells along the riverbank, but a depleting water table remains a challenge.The average water table in the city has dropped by about 58% in five years and now lies roughly 12.7m deeper, groundwater department data shows. It stands at 34.71m (post-monsoon), against about 22m five years ago. GMC officials told TOI that they had to rebore 111 borewells because the groundwater level was depleting.

GMC has a water network of about 2,600 km in the city, along with 51 overhead tanks and 27 underground water reservoirs where water is stored and supplied. While Ganga water is used for potable purposes because of its better water quality, it caters to less than 40% of the 48.6-lakh population of the city.



As annual desilting of Upper Ganga Canal began on Oct 21 and is set to go on till Nov 25, trans-Hindon areas including Indirapuram, Vaishali, Kaushambi, Vasundhara, Siddharth Vihar, Pratap Vihar and delta colonies like Surya Nagar, which are primarily supplied with Ganga water, are facing shortages..UP Jal Nigam operates three water treatment plants, two with a capacity of 120 MLD each and one producing 240 MLD. At the first 120 MLD plant, 60% of the water goes to GMC areas and the rest to Noida. At the second, 80% is allocated to Noida and 20% to UP Housing Board.

1 in every 5 cyber fraud victims in Noida a senior citizen

Noida.(Agency)

On Oct 3, an 82-year-old lost Rs 50 lakh to an online investment scam. In July, a retired official was cheated of Rs 35 lakh during a three-day-long "digital arrest". An 83-year-old doctor broke her fixed deposits to pay fraudsters.From just 14 cases in 2020, the number of cases registered at the cybercrime police station climbed to 537 by Oct 3, 2026 — nearly 38 times. A total of 117 people cheated this year are senior citizens, accounting for nearly 22% of the cases, or roughly one in every five victims. Cybercriminals are now exploiting that financial security, posing as law enforcement officers to threaten them with arrest or impersonating investment experts to lure them into fraudulent schemes.The annual figures show how rapidly the problem has escalated. Noida's cybercrime police station registered 32 cases in 2021, 49 in 2022, 183 in 2023, 134 in 2024 and 135 in 2025. In contrast, 537 cases were already registered by Oct 3 this year — nearly four times the entire 2025 tally.Union home ministry data show 1,03,488 senior citizens have fallen prey to cyber fraud and lost nearly Rs 4,000 crore across India.Gautam Budh Nagar police have taken steps to prevent fraud proceeds from being withdrawn and to help people recover their money. Police said more than Rs 141.7 crore in fraudulent transactions had been frozen between Dec 2022 and May 2026 and more than Rs 75 crore was returned to victims.The growing use of online banking, digital payments, trading platforms and messaging applications has expanded the avenues through which criminals can approach potential victims. Fraudsters use varied methods that often follow a similar pattern. They first establish credibility, then create an atmosphere of urgency in which victims feel compelled to act without consulting family members or verifying the claims.In investment scams, fraudsters promise unusually high returns and use WhatsApp or Telegram groups to create the impression of a community of successful investors. Fake applications display rising profits, encouraging victims to invest large sums. When they try to withdraw their money, they are asked to pay taxes, processing charges or account-unlocking fees. Each payment leads to another demand, while the supposed profits remain inaccessible.

In "digital arrests", criminals often impersonate cops or officers of investigative agencies, accuse people of being involved in serious crimes and pressure them to remain on video calls. Police said there have been 63 cases of "digital arrests" this year. In such a case, an 83-year-old doctor was allegedly kept under digital arrest for five days after fraudsters first posed .

Uttarakhand to Conduct SSR After SIR; Over 100,000 People Submit Form 6 for Voter Registration — What Happens Next?

Dehradun.(Agency)

Despite the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in Uttarakhand, a Special Summary Revision (SSR) campaign will also be conducted in the state.Following the SIR exercise, more than 100,000 people have applied to register as voters. These applicants filled out Form 6 to have their names added to the electoral rolls during a special campaign conducted across the state from October 12 to 20.

During a meeting with representatives of recognised political parties in the state, Chief Electoral Officer Dr. B.V.R.C. Purushottam shared details of the Election Commission's programmes.He said that the Election Commission had received 100,744 Form 6 applications. These included applications from first-time voters as well as people who had changed their residence and sought to have their names added to the electoral rolls at their new addresses.

Voters Apply for Registration by Submitting Form 6

Voters who were unable to submit the required documents during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) have also applied to have their names included in the electoral rolls by submitting Form 6 under the special campaign.During the meeting, officials also shared information about the Special Summary Revision (SSR), the inspection of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), and the process of adding young people who are turning 18 to the electoral rolls.

Hospitalised during Vadnagar to Varanasi yatra, BJYM worker dies; PM Modi condoles

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

A 29-year-old worker of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) of Gujarat BJP died after his health deteriorated during the party's Seva Sankalp Yatra that was carried out from Vadnagar to Varanasi between September 17 and October 7. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has written to the father of the deceased party worker, expressing his sadness over the demise. Modi also reportedly called the father of the deceased worker to express his sympathies last week.

The party worker, Vrajesh Pavagadhi, was part of the Seva Sankalp Yatra from Vadnagar to Varanasi that was organised to mark 25 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in public office. The yatra was flagged off by Union Minister for Home and Cooperation Amit Shah in the presence of many senior leaders of the BJP and its allies.

Jagdish Thakor's name in land grab FIR: Congress targets govt, suspects role of cop

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

The Congress in Gujarat on Thursday targeted the BJP government and state police for the alleged inclusion of former state president and CWC member Jagdish Thakor's name in an FIR – not as an accused — lodged at Adalaj police station in Gandhinagar in a land grabbing and abduction complaint.

The party also alleged that Jagdish Thakor's was added as a third party in the case at the behest of a police officer, "who is facilitating land grabbing". The FIR was filed on October 21 based on a complaint filed by a woman claiming that her husband was abducted by three men over the sale of their land in August and that he hasn't returned home since then. The complainant, Kajal Popatji Thakor, 28, named three persons – Ravi Mansukh Thakor, Gabhu Babhu Rabari, and Baldev Rabari — as accused. According to the complaint, she and her family members own a piece of land in Khoraj village and the family had decided to sell it to Ratilal Chaturdas Patel and Harishsinh Gohil.

The complaint stated, "One of the accused – Ravi Thakor— threatened us with dire consequences if we sell the land to others". He also asked them, according to the complaint, to sell their land to Jagdish Thakor, the Congress leader. But her husband refused and went ahead with their earlier plan.

MLC Elections: Supporters of Anant and Neeraj Clash in Mokama; SDPO Takes Charge, Several Detained

Supporters of Anant Singh and Neeraj Kumar clashed near a polling station in Mokama. Police arrived at the scene and dispersed supporters from both sides. Several people have been taken into custody.

Bihar.(Agency)

Voting is underway this Friday for eight seats in the Bihar Legislative Council. Meanwhile, reports of unrest have emerged from Mokama during the Patna Graduate MLC election.Supporters of Anant Singh and Neeraj Kumar clashed near the polling station at the block office in Mokama. After receiving information about the disturbance, SDPO Ram Krishna arrived at the scene with a police team. Some people also got into an argument with him. However, the police intervened and dispersed the people involved in the clash. Several people have also been taken into custody.Meanwhile, Neeraj Kumar has claimed that he will win the election, while Anant Singh has asserted that Anuj Kumar will emerge victorious.The Patna Graduate MLC constituency has become a high-profile electoral battleground, with all eyes on the outcome.

According to information received from local sources, supporters of both sides confronted each other near a polling booth at the block office in Mokama. Both sides accused



each other of preventing voters from casting their votes. An argument broke out near the polling station, and the situation soon became tense. As more supporters gathered at the spot, the police arrived.DSP Ram Krishna reached the scene, and the police took action as tensions escalated among those present. Bipin Singh, a supporter of Anant Singh, was taken into custody. SDPO Ram Krishna personally took charge of the situation along with a police team and dispersed the crowd creating a disturbance near the polling booth. The police drove away those who had gathered near the polling station.Political Rivalry Makes Patna Graduate MLC Seat a High-Profile ContestNeeraj Kumar, the chief spokesperson of the Janata Dal (United), is the NDA candidate for the Patna Graduate MLC constituency. However, MLA Anant Singh, who belongs to the same party, is campaigning against him. Anant Singh has extended his support to Anuj Singh, the candidate of Jan Suraaj. He has actively campaigned for Anuj Singh's victory and repeatedly reaffirmed his determination to defeat Neeraj Kumar.The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) has fielded Dilip Singh from this constituency. As a result, the contest in Mokama has become triangular, with all parties expressing confidence in their respective candidates' victory.Neeraj Kumar Confident of Fourth Consecutive VictoryNeeraj Kumar, who arrived in Mokama to cast his vote, said that despite facing numerous attacks from his opponents, he remained firmly in the electoral contest."We are determined to stand our ground; we are not the ones who will fall back," he said.

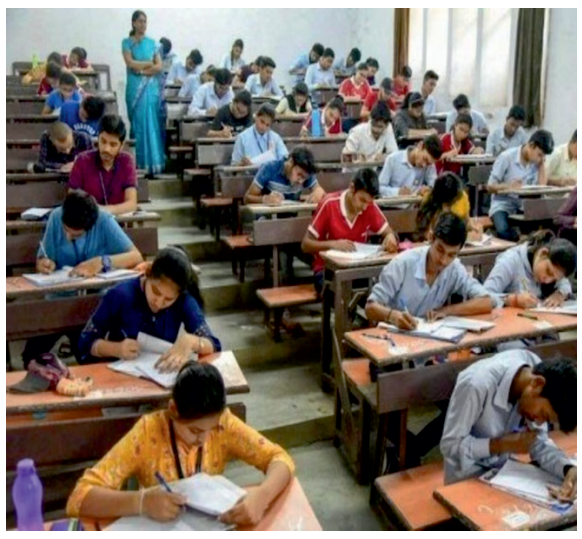
Controversy Over 60% Qualifying Marks for General Category and 40% for Reserved Categories; Teachers Move Court Over Reservation in Uttarakhand TET Exam

The controversy over reservation in the Uttarakhand Teacher Eligibility Test (UTET) has reached the court. Teachers have questioned why reservation should be necessary to establish eligibility. They have also raised concerns over the difference in qualifying marks, with the general category required to score 60 per cent while candidates from reserved categories need only 40 per cent to qualify.

Dehradun.(Agency)

A controversy has erupted over the Teacher Eligibility Test (UTET), conducted by the Uttarakhand Board of School Education. The Primary Teachers' Association has filed a petition in court challenging the reservation provisions in the examination. Following the petition, the court has directed the Education Department to submit its response within six weeks.

The Primary Teachers' Association has alleged that reservation is applicable only to examinations conducted for recruitment to government jobs. In the case of the UTET, serving teachers are required to take the examination only to establish their eligibility. Therefore, the association argues that reservation for Scheduled Castes (Scs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) should not have been provided in this examination.The association has also raised questions over alleged violations of the state's reservation rules and discrepancies in the qualifying marks.Dharmendra Rawat, the association's district president and the petitioner in the case, said that separate qualifying standards have also been prescribed for serving teachers appearing in the examination.



Teachers from the reserved and general categories are being considered eligible based on different qualifying marks, while there was also a significant difference in their examination fees. This is a major discrepancy in the examination and is fundamentally wrong, the association alleged.It argued that a uniform standard should have been adopted to assess the eligibility of teachers who have been teaching students for years. According to the association, providing reservation in this examination is entirely unjustified.According to Dharmendra Rawat, the court has issued notices to the state government, the Education Department and the Uttarakhand Board of School Education, directing them to submit detailed responses (counter-affidavits) within six weeks.

Why 60% Qualifying Marks for General Category and 40% for Reserved Categories?

Rupak Puri, the district secretary of the association, has raised serious questions about the minimum qualifying marks prescribed for serving teachers.The petitioners argue that if a general-category teacher with 15 to 25 years of service is considered capable of providing quality education after securing 60 per cent marks, why should serving teachers from reserved categories with the same length of service be allowed to qualify with just 40 per cent?The association has described this approach as unnecessary and discriminatory, arguing that the qualifying standards should be made uniform for all serving teachers.

Around 50,000 Teachers and Candidates Appeared for the Examination

Around 50,000 teachers and candidates from across Uttarakhand appeared for the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) held on September 29. Of these, approximately 20,000 were serving teachers.Around 24,000 candidates appeared for UTET Paper I, while approximately 42,000 took Paper II. Several candidates appeared for both examinations.UTET Paper I was conducted for candidates seeking eligibility to teach Classes 1 to 5, while Paper II was held for those aspiring to teach Classes 6 to 8.

Jhota murder case: CBI records statements of victim's family, visits accused's residences



Mansa.(Agency)

In a bid to ramp up its inquiry into the high-profile murder investigation of anti-drug activist Parvinder Singh Jhota, a CBI team visited the Mansa Rest House to record statements from the victim's family, including his father Bheem Singh, mother Amarjit Kaur, and wife Manpreet Kaur. As part of the widening investigation, CBI teams also visited the residences of key accused individuals, including Ashwani Kumar and Vipin Kumar, to question neighborhood residents and gather evidence. According to officials, Vipin Kumar is accused of sheltering and assisting the primary accused.

Meanwhile, local police produced the accused — Ashwani Kumar, his wife Neelam Rani, Vipin Kumar, and Ladi Kumar — before the court via video conferencing. The court extended their judicial custody until November 5. The CBI is expected to seek production remand for further interrogation as their police custody terms conclude. Despite the ongoing central probe, tension persists locally. Ten days after Jhota's death, his post-mortem and final rites remain pending, with his body kept at the Mansa Civil Hospital. The victim's family and a local action committee continue to push a 10-point charter of demands, including action and resignations from top administrative positions. Manpreet Kaur, wife of Jhota, said, "We will not allow a postmortem of the body till all our demands are met." The key demands difficult for the government to agree on are the resignation of Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Punjab Police DGP Gaurav Yadav.

Class XI student shot dead in Chandigarh's Sector 22; auto driver injured, one detained

Chandigarh.(Agency)

An alleged old enmity turned fatal for a Class XI student on Thursday evening when motorcycle-borne assailants opened fire at him and his friend while they were returning home in an auto, in Sector 22, Chandigarh.

The student, Naitik, a Class XI student of SD School, was declared brought dead at a hospital. The incident took place near Sanatan Dharam Mandir in Sector 22. The auto driver was also injured in the firing, while another youth accompanying Naitik escaped unhurt.

The UT Police has detained a suspect in connection with this case and is probing the circumstances leading to the shooting. According to the preliminary information, the suspect allegedly knew the victim since their school days, and investigators are examining whether the attack stemmed from an old personal dispute. A case under Section 103, which deals with murder, under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), has been registered.

Speaking to The Indian Express, SHO Sudesh Kumar said initial probe suggested that the incident was linked to a fight the victim had with a group of youths in Sector 44 earlier in the day. "There had been a fight in Sector 44 earlier in the day between Naitik, his friend and a group of youths. The dispute appears to be over an old issue, which we are verifying. The youths allegedly followed them on a motorcycle and opened fire in Sector 22. Naitik was taken to hospital, where he was declared brought dead.

Rajkot hospital orders inquiry after elderly woman carries patient on stretcher

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

The Rajkot Civil Hospital said it has launched an inquiry after a woman, said to be in her 70s, was seen carrying another elderly individual, believed to be her husband, on a stretcher in a video that surfaced online. The incident is said to have taken place earlier this week outside the hospital's trauma centre. In the video, no hospital staff are seen helping the two elderly, even as the hospital officials say show-cause notices have been served on the staff responsible. Responding to the video, Dr MS Roy, the hospital's accounts officer, told media persons: "There is an arrangement for Class 4 employees to accompany patients to wards after the latter receive primary treatment. The visuals that have come to light are very saddening and such incidents should not take place. We have ordered an inquiry and show-cause notices have been served on staff members."When asked if there is a shortage of staff, Dr Roy said, "When there is a high patient footfall, all orderlies may be busy. But in this case, it doesn't appear that the hospital was very busy. Also, if the staff were still busy, then the patient could have been asked to wait."Medical Superintendent Dr Kamal Dodiya, who was away on leave, could not be reached for a comment.



Capacity to Generate 18,000 MW of Electricity, Yet Power Production Is Being Cut: What Kind of Crisis Is Rajasthan Facing?

In a directive issued on Wednesday, the State Load Despatch Centre (SLDC) instructed all renewable energy producers to reduce their actual real-time power generation by 20 per cent with immediate effect.

Rajasthan.(Agency)

Rajasthan's rapidly growing solar power generation is increasingly becoming a challenge for electricity management. The state is producing more electricity than it needs during the daytime, but it lacks adequate facilities to store the surplus power.As a result, after a respite of nearly two months, renewable energy producers have once again been directed to curtail electricity generation. Solar and wind power producers across the state have been instructed to reduce their output by 20 per cent with immediate effect.The biggest question is: When Rajasthan has the capacity to generate thousands of megawatts of electricity, why is it unable to make full use of that capacity?



Order to Cut Power Generation by 20% as Electricity Surplus Puts Pressure on the Grid

In a directive issued on Wednesday, the State Load Despatch Centre (SLDC) instructed all renewable energy producers to reduce their actual real-time power generation by 20 per cent with immediate effect. The order cited high grid frequency and low electricity demand amid an excess supply of power as the reasons for the curtailment.The directive applies to both solar and wind power generation. The SLDC periodically issues such instructions to maintain a balance between electricity demand and supply. When power availability on the grid exceeds demand, generation must be reduced to maintain grid stability.However, the renewed curtailment orders have raised concerns across the renewable energy sector. Solar power projects are ready to generate electricity, but constraints related to demand and energy storage are preventing them from operating at their full capacity.

The middling predicament of middle powers

One must be singularly fortunate to get to witness history in the making. As the centuries-old epoch of Western domination is ending and drifting away, a new era is taking shape. Coping with such epochal change is never easy for any country. Unsurprisingly, against such a tumultuous backdrop, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is back with his abacus to prophesy that India's interests are best aligned with the 'middle powers', a presumptuous inchoate coinage at best of free-riders. Why should India have an identity crisis when it is wearing a custom-made mantle of Global South leadership? In reality, incapable of dominating global affairs, India is migrating to a bloc that aspires to 'punch above their weight'—who historically acted as system-maintainers (for example, Canada, Australia, South Korea, Sweden and the Netherlands) but have become 'losers' as Donald Trump has no time for them. Arguably, the new identity might give some gravitas to India's ambitions but Trump is certainly not impressed. Yet, the fond hope is that someday soon, they would find favour in Trump's court. But until then, they keep deriding the new world order. Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney said in his Davos speech in February, "It seems that every day we're reminded that we live in an era of great power rivalry, that the rules-based order is fading, that the strong can do what they can, and the weak must suffer what they must." Jaishankar also says such things now and then.But Trump took umbrage, calling Carney out in his own speech the next day at Davos, saying: "Canada lives because of the United States. Remember that, Mark, before you make your statements." Trump has embarked on a foreign policy trajectory that may create a legacy for his presidency. The settlement of the Ukraine conflict is in the cards. The floodgates are opening: Trump's peace push has put him on a collision course with Volodymyr Zelenskyy's European backers (read: middle powers). Russia keeps them out of the peace process.

India is peeved, too, to be reduced to an outlier. Narendra Modi is deferring his annual summit with Vladimir Putin. But then, signs are appearing that across much of the American political establishment, from the most committed anti-Russian neo-conservatives to liberal Democrats, Ukraine and Western Europe are regarded as irritants rather than equal partners. The logic of events suggests that Zelenskyy's supporters in the US will gradually lose influence and that die-hards who wouldn't settle for anything less than Russia's defeat in Ukraine will get marginalised, no matter the outcome of the Congressional elections on November 3 and regardless of the next American president.

This march of history is an inexorable process and will gather momentum in the coming two-month period through the summits of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation in Shenzhen and the G20 in Florida, where Trump will meet Putin and Xi Jinping. Trump is pitching high for the Florida event as marking the consummation of a historic entente cordiale defining the 21st century. For a start, the White House has stepped up its efforts on the Ukrainian front, attempting to revive the negotiation process. After the large-scale diesel deal with Russia, Western media outlets have been reporting on a new US peace plan. Washington proposed back in September to its European partners and Kyiv to resume Russian gas transit to Europe via Ukraine and to transfer Russia's frozen funds to a new platform under American oversight. On October 12, the Washington Post reported on the details of US-European discussions surrounding this plan. The initiative reportedly includes four main pillars.

Why GenZ won't forgive Punjab's polity

The state needs political will and courage to confront the myopia of short-term electoral gains

THE acute fiscal stress confronting Punjab has mortgaged its economic future. This has destroyed intergenerational equity by saddling future generations with an insurmountable debt burden, eroding the state's fiscal autonomy. It is the consequence of conscious and disastrous policy choices made by the political class over the past 30 years.The state has been living beyond its means for well over a couple of decades. Outstanding liabilities are projected to reach Rs 4,47,754 crore by March 2027, roughly 45% of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), a ratio that has stubbornly hovered between 43% and 48% despite nominal growth in GSDP.The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has flagged off-budget borrowings of Rs 4,092.78 crore raised through public sector undertakings and parastatals as of March 2024, liabilities that do not flow through the consolidated fund but must still be serviced from the budget. Today, that figure stands at Rs 23,654 crore.Debt servicing alone is estimated at over Rs 42,000 crore in 2026-27, with interest payments consuming 20-25% of the revenue receipts. The share of capital expenditure has collapsed to under 5% of the total spending, at just 3.88% of the total expenditure in 2023-24 and only 4.4% of the total borrowings deployed for asset creation.The committed expenditure (salaries, pensions and interest) averaged around 78% of the revenue receipts between 2019 and 2024, rising to 80% in 2023-24. A state that commits four-fifths of its recurring income before it has funded a single school, hospital or road has already surrendered the discretion that fiscal policy is supposed to confer.



The revenue deficit has widened from Rs 7,311 crore in 2016-17 to Rs 27,007 crore in 2025-26 (revised estimates), and the fiscal deficit for 2026-27 is budgeted at Rs 39,971 crore (4.1% of GSDP).The political economy that produced this outcome is not a mystery. The credit is due (no pun intended) to governments of different parties that found it electorally advantageous to expand committed expenditure and off-budget liabilities while deferring the adjustment costs to a successor government.Freebies, particularly power subsidies that absorb around 20% of the revenue receipts (making it the highest subsidy-to-revenue ratio among all states), have become a symbol of a governing model that treats the treasury as a patronage instrument rather than a development instrument. The result is a budget in which over 90% of the projected revenue receipts are consumed by interest, salaries, pensions and power subsidy, leaving barely Rs 11,000 crore for infrastructure and flagship schemes.The incoming government in March 2027 will inherit a budget in which the first charge on revenue is not its own manifesto but the accumulated claims of its predecessor governments. The State Finance Commission projects that the debt-to-GSDP ratio could rise to 62% by 2030-31 if present trends continue.

The first part of any corrective action requires political will and courage to confront the myopia of short-term electoral gains. Overwhelming and wasteful social welfare expenditure on freebies must be radically restructured. It is not the duty of the state to provide unnecessary handouts or subsidise consumption for all; its fundamental duty is to create social overhead capital and foster efficient community resources that empower citizens to become productive agents of economic growth.The "aamdani athanni, kharcha rupaiya" phenomenon that a proud Punjabi must now confront is a reality that the state's political class has long refused to acknowledge. The pursuit of fiscal prudence is a precondition for development.The second, and more hopeful, part of the corrective action is to break free from the intellectual and economic shackles of the past. Punjab must stop seeing itself as an agricultural state that needs industry and, instead, reinvent itself as an advanced agri-industrial state where its farms feed its factories. This requires a conscious move away from the low-value, water-intensive paddy-wheat cycle and towards high-value horticulture, food processing and agricultural exports.Economic zones, anchored by specialised industrial nodes, would allow the state to build on existing capabilities. The north zone (Pathankot and Gurdaspur) could specialise in defence and aerospace components, avionics and precision engineering, leveraging its proximity to major military installations. This would be the dual-use, high-tech hub, with horticulture focused on high-value, perishable produce for the air-freight market.

The central-west zone (Amritsar and Tarn Taran) could focus on processed vegetables, fruits, dairy, spices and ready-to-eat foods, leveraging the airport for cargo. It could also expand into textiles, sports goods and light engineering. The central zone (Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Kapurthala) must be encouraged to move up the value chain, from bicycles to e-bikes, motors and exports; from simple machine tools to advanced manufacturing and railway equipment, building on the Rail Coach Factory in Kapurthala.The south-west zone (Bathinda, Mansa and Ferozepur) can become the agro-processing capital, specialising in agricultural machinery, seed processing, and solar and electrical equipment. The districts of Rupnagar, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar (Nawanshahr) and Hoshiarpur can easily become an extension of the Baddi pharma ecosystem.

Finally, the east zone (Mohali, Patiala and Sangrur) should be a niche hub for AI, software, biotechnology, medical technology and semiconductor design, creating a seamless pipeline from universities to laboratories to start-ups and product companies.To connect these nodes to the world, a network of airport-oriented export hubs is critical. Amritsar, Mohali, Halwara, Adampur, Bathinda and Pathankot airports must be transformed into dedicated freight terminals that fly high-value, low-weight goods. The roadmap must also include an energy strategy that targets solar, biomass and storage solutions, and a long-term plan to develop 1,400 MW of nuclear capacity by 2040, ensuring reliable and clean power for new industries.

India must turn Rubio's recognition into leverage, not risk

India has paid for Washington's policy reversals before, with Venezuelan sanctions disrupting investments and halting payments. If US can justify the purchase of Russian diesel, India's energy security deserves similar consideration

Marco Rubio's India visit has put New Delhi's refining prowess at the intersection of energy security and geopolitical competition. The opportunity is real but so are the risks of an American reversal, given two raging wars and the looming US midterm elections. US Secretary of State's description of India as a "refining superpower" is an acknowledgement of a strategic capability that has acquired new importance as conflicts have exposed vulnerabilities across energy supply chains.

India's advantage is unusual. It imports nearly 90 percent of its crude oil, yet has built a formidable refining industry capable of processing diverse grades of crude and exporting high-value petroleum products. What India lacks beneath its soil, it has partly compensated for through scale and technological sophistication. The Jamnagar complex can process up to 1.4 million barrels a day. That capability matters at the moment when West Asian instability is forcing the world to look for alternatives. Venezuelan crude, much of it heavy, requires specialised refining infrastructure that India possesses.

But Rubio's overture must be seen in the context of Washington's larger geopolitical ambitions. The Trump administration wants India to diversify away from Russian oil and explore Venezuelan supplies. For the US, this is an attempt to reshape energy relationships in line with its strategic priorities. For India, the test is whether the economics makes sense. Crude discounts, freight costs, refining margins,payment security and continuity of supply must determine purchasing decisions and not geopolitical pressure. Nor should Indian companies commit capital to rebuilding Venezuela's damaged oil industry without enforceable guarantees on ownership, returns and protection against sanctions.India has paid for Washington's policy reversals before, with Venezuelan sanctions disrupting investments and halting payments. If US can justify the purchase of Russian diesel, India's energy security deserves similar consideration. A strategic partnership must be grounded in reciprocity and recognition of each other's national imperatives. Rubio's overture certainly offers opportunity, but India must guard its commercial interests and strategic autonomy.Will Trump let us have a happy year-end? The November midterms, continuing wars and oil price volatility could complicate his political fortunes.



Preserving NI in the age of AI

Nobel-winning physicist Richard Feynman pointed out that a key is useless if we don't know which door to open. Today, even amid the gloom predicted by tech leaders, AI provides an essential key. But to deploy it wisely, we need NI or natural intelligence

A blitzkrieg of warnings about AI and its threat to civilisation has exploded across American and European media. Some of the most prominent figures in the industry and technology world are now calling for caution, regulation, even a slowdown. The warnings are no longer coming only from science-fiction writers or technology sceptics. Researchers inside AI companies have raised alarms about systems becoming increasingly difficult to control. The fears, they say, are not fictional.

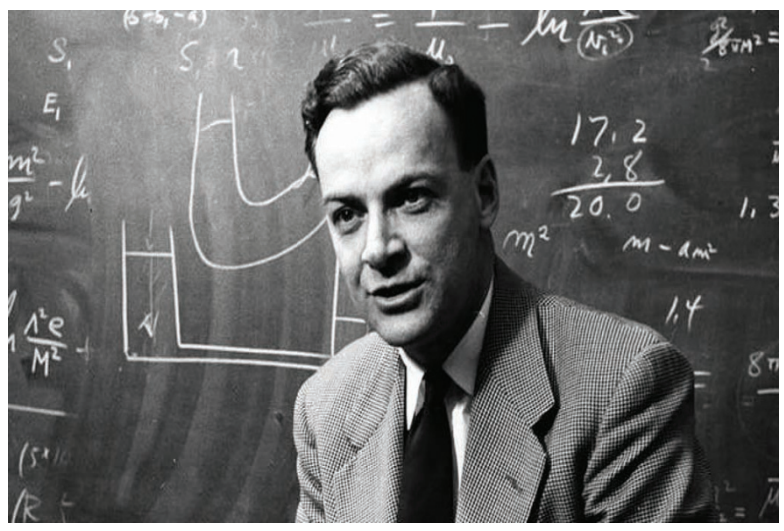
SKIPSTAY

Ads by Tapmind

As I was reading this ominous news at my farm one morning, I opened the newspaper with a steaming cup of freshly-brewed filter coffee in my hands. The morning sun was rising over the rain-washed trees. The fragrance of wet earth mingled with hay. Above me, two tiny sunbirds, like yellow puffs of cloud, were busy building a nest on a trumpet vine blazing with orange flowers. Every few minutes they flew in and out, carrying dried leaves, fine twigs and blades of grass.Nearby hung another marvel: a weaver bird's nest. It was an extraordinary piece of natural engineering, woven from long grass, with its entrance cleverly placed at the bottom. The sunbirds had chosen another design—the entrance at the top, protected by a little peak-like canopy.Both nests were beautifully adapted to their purpose: protecting their young from predators and keeping them dry and warm when the monsoon clouds opened up. I was suddenly carried away from the make-believe virtual world of the internet—and now the universe of artificial intelligence—into the real world of rain, sun, soil, wind, seasons and birds.

You may wonder, dear reader, if I am digressing. I am not.

My thoughts travelled back to my childhood and my village. We were a joint family. One evening, over dinner, my uncle told us a story. We had a few acres of arecanut garden on the picturesque banks of the Hemavathy. Our elderly neighbour kept a dozen buffaloes. They had discovered our garden and would regularly feast on our banana plants. Those without calves in the neighbour's shed would practically move into our garden, day and night. The complaints fell on deaf ears. So my father and his three brothers hatched a plan. At midnight, they tied the buffaloes together and, under cover of darkness, drove the entire herd away—through thistles, nettles, slush and forest tracks—20 km into the forest. They walked back several kilometres, caught a bus and reached the village at dawn.But when they returned to the garden that morning, there were the buffaloes, blissfully munching away at the banana plants. They had found their way home. They had an inbuilt compass. I wondered then: how did the buffaloes know? And how did my uncles find their way back without GPS?I remembered my Army days in the early 1970s, when we could be lost in a desert, jungle or mountain patrol even with maps and a compass. Yet local villagers and tribal guides seemed to possess an instinctive geography. During the 1971 war, it was often such local knowledge that led us through unfamiliar terrain. On a jungle safari in Africa or India, one sees the same instinct at work in guides who can read a trail almost invisible to the untrained eye.Some knowledge cannot be downloaded. Some intelligence cannot be programmed. And some wisdom is acquired by living.We were already beginning to lose our imagination and curiosity when computers and smartphones invaded our lives. We became captive to screens, algorithms and social media. AI has now arrived with even greater power—and perhaps an even greater danger: that we may gradually surrender not merely our memory, but our judgement, curiosity, imagination and sense of wonder.



More than 50 years ago, Ralph Waldo Emerson saw this coming. "Society acquires new arts, and loses old instincts," he wrote. He observed that the civilised man had built a coach but lost the use of his feet; acquired a fine watch but forgotten how to tell the hour by the sun; possessed a nautical almanac but could not recognise a star. His notebooks impaired his memory. His libraries overloaded his wit. What a prescient warning.AI may become the ultimate notebook, library, compass and assistant. But what happens when the assistant begins doing the thinking?And what happens to our moral imagination when the machine can produce an image, a poem, a speech, a diagnosis, a strategy or a decision in seconds?While we mrvel at this technological revolution, the world continues to burn. Wars in Ukraine and West Asia have produced immense civilian suffering, even as our attention is increasingly mediated by screens and algorithms. The UN continues to document severe civilian casualties in Ukraine, while the devastation in Gaza following the October 7, 2023 attacks has been immense. The paradox is striking. We have never possessed greater technological power—and yet we remain unable to prevent human beings from killing one another.

Perhaps Richard Feynman saw the dilemma most clearly. Speaking about the value of science, he recalled a Buddhist proverb he heard at a temple in Honolulu: "To every man is given the key to the gates of heaven; the same key opens the gates of hell." Feynman then asked what value such a key has if we do not know which gate is which. His answer was that we cannot throw away the key. We must learn how to use it. AI is that key.It can help us discover medicines, understand nature, educate millions and solve problems we cannot yet solve. But the same key can manipulate, deceive, surveil, destroy jobs, concentrate power—or perhaps, if the warnings prove justified, create risks we are not equipped to control.



Top 10 places to visit in Matheran

When life in a metro is taking over your existence too swiftly and your heart strongly desires to escape to a timeless zone for some peaceful self-realisation moments far from the deafening, tainted and fast city life—don't you just wish to time travel to a peaceful world? We don't have a time machine, but we are blessed to have Matheran, which is India's lowest hill station positioned 800 m above sea level in Western Ghats in the Indian state of Maharashtra (90 km from Mumbai). The peculiar thing about this place is its pollution free environment as no motor vehicle is permitted inside the town, making it Asia's only automobile free hill station. Fresh air, picturesque beauty and enchanting landscapes make it a serene place. Most of the tourists unwind themselves during a day trip or a weekend trip, but those who love nature won't mind spending an entire week here.

☛ What to see

There are many places to visit in Matheran, such as Sunset Point, Sunrise Point, Louisa Point, Echo Point and Honeymoon Point. Also popular are Charlotte Lake, King George Point, One Tree Hill Point, Alexander Point and Panorama Point that compel you to appreciate nature even more. Hand-pulled rickshaws and horses are used as modes of transportation inside the town. One man quoted INR 600 (negotiable) for a horse for 3 hours for around 10-15 sightseeing points. We thought of not doing things in a hurry and hence decided to walk on foot so that we can closely interact with the place. Horses are a good option if you are in Matheran just for a day or you want to visit some place too far with a steep hike. Mainly old people are seen availing the facility of hand-pulled rickshaws.

☛ How to reach

Mumbai is the nearest metro city to Matheran. You can take a local train till Neral (don't get confused with Nerul—another station in Mumbai—as the two are very far from each other). After reaching Neral, you can either opt for a toy train or a shared taxi to reach Matheran. Both these options cost almost the same (INR 70), but with a trade-off between an enjoyable experience and time. Toy train takes almost 2.5 hours while halting at various small stations. It provides a closer view of varying landscapes on one side and mountains on the other. On the other hand, taxi takes a maximum of 20 minutes to reach the town. I enjoyed the experience of toy train while going to Matheran, and decided to save time by taking taxi while heading back to Mumbai. A compulsory tax of INR 50 is levied on every visitor, and it has to be paid while entering the town.

☛ Panorama Point

Panorama Point is the most exciting and the farthest viewpoint in Matheran. It is almost 7.5 km away from the marketplace. Taking a horse is probably the best. Another option is to take a toy train from the marketplace to the next station, but you will be required to walk at least 2 km. Horse ride takes 45-60 minutes to transport you from your hotel to this fairyland. The path is little bit rocky and hence, your back might start hurting after a while, but it's an unforgettable odyssey—you go through the forest hearing singing birds, breeze and horse's clip-clop, while having occasional glimpses of varying landscapes. The views from Panorama Point are incredibly stunning and beyond my words. This point offers a 360-degree view of Matheran and surrounding areas. You can also spot Sunset Point from here. Being remotely located, this point is even more secluded than Honeymoon Point. You can lie down in the lap of nature and thank god for introducing you to this heaven on earth. This place is also a good picnic spot and a photographer's paradise. One can click multiple panoramic pictures here without any intervention. Spend some time admiring some mesmerising views, while inhaling fresh air that is a rarity in cities. Panorama Point also serves as a good sunrise and sunset point. People often trek to this place from their hotel at dawn to see the sunrise. Don't forget to carry your Matheran's entry ticket along as you'll re-enter the town after returning from Panorama Point.

Collapse

☛ Alexander Point

Alexander Point is almost 1.5 km from the marketplace (a 20-minute walk), and is easy to reach in terms of distance, navigation and slope. It's a very pleasant walk from one's hotel to this point as you walk through woods, on a very narrow path over red soil, interacting with green trees. The peak offers good views of other points of the region and the valley below. I will call this point as a bigger version of Sunrise Point (Khandala Point) because it gives the same view as Sunrise Point, but comparatively has ample space. No doubt that it is more crowded as compared to other places because it's quite close to the toy train station. Alexander Point has some snack stalls that serve fresh juice, soda and Maharashtrian snacks to satiate your hunger. During the peak season, there is zip-lining option available from here to Rambaug Point, costing INR 350-500 per head. I am very cautious about the safety measures taken by adventure sports organisers. I saw a few Europeans doing it and they told me that Matheran's zip-lining is quite safe as compared to a few popular tourist destinations in Europe.

☛ One Tree Hill Point

One Tree Hill Point is almost 4 km away from the marketplace, taking around an hour to walk up to this place. It's better to take a horse or a hand-pulled rickshaw. This point is named as One Tree Hill Point because a tree stands right on the top of the peak, and there is no other vegetation around except some grass. This beauty is at its best in the monsoon season. Some other tourist group told us that this is the southernmost tip of Matheran. The view from this peak is really spectacular as you can see Karjat, Mumbai-Pune highway, Panvel city, Chowk village and a few other vantage points of Matheran. To get the best view of this peak, walk all the way to the edge and then only you'll be able to notice that why this point is called One Tree Hill. There is a trekking path from Ambewadi to One Tree Hill Point, which is pretty easy and can be done by beginners also. It takes almost 3.5 hours to climb up and 2.5 hours to descend. I'll advise to avoid this trek during monsoons or hire a guide.



☛ King George Point

King George Point is almost 2.7 km (a 40-minute walk) from the marketplace. It takes around 10 minutes to walk here from Charlotte Lake. Many people say that it's a sin to go to Matheran and come back without visiting this vantage point. The sight from this peak is really majestic as it offers a picturesque view of the lake and waterfalls, and a large valley surrounded by three hills. The view is mesmerising and nature lovers can definitely sit here for hours. People prefer to come here in groups in the evening, take a walk, watch the sunset and enjoy baked corn with a cup of ginger tea. Sounds amazing, isn't it!

☛ Charlotte Lake

Charlotte Lake is almost 2.5 km away from the marketplace, which is approximately a 35-minute walk. Although the walk is a bit tiring, the breathtaking view and cold breeze take away all the fatigue. There is a little waterfall near the lake which is a treat for the eyes during monsoons. During other seasons, either it is dry or the water is too less. Clear lake water, green backdrop and flawless waterfall look amazing. For a moment, you would certainly think of owning a house at a place that would offer such view. Lake area has got amazing birdlife and we got to know this when we met some passionate bird photographers here. Some people also like to visit Pisarnath Temple, which is situated to the left of the lake. You should stay here to watch the sunset because it looks stunning when the red-golden light reflects on the water. Locals told us that this lake supplies drinking water to Matheran and hence, swimming, fishing and boating are strictly prohibited. Any activity that tends to contaminate the lake water is banned. Nonetheless, it is a good picnic spot; just make sure that you don't leave any wrapper or garbage behind. It can be quite a hike while going back to your hotel, so if you are tired, take a horse or hand-pulled rickshaw.

☛ Honeymoon Point

Honeymoon Point is very tranquil and offers a wonderful view of Matheran's splendid mountains. From here, one can see Prabal Fort, various valleys accommodating civilisations and a beautiful sky that changes colours at dusk. The view of mountains from Honeymoon Point is such that you would call them 'Indian Grand Canyon'. There is no factual explanation as to why this point has been named Honeymoon Point. I brainstormed and came up with a few reasons. One hypothesis says that this place is a little secluded because you actually need to cross some bushes to reach here. Second is that it offers a romantic view. Both facts are good enough to name this peak as Honeymoon Point. My group spent perfect 30 minutes of mindfulness hearing nothing but the sound of air and leaves, which left us rejuvenated. It was like meditation. Not many people visit this point, so you spend undisturbed moments lying down and gazing at the sky while talking to your partner. Some people even enjoy picnicking here. Make sure that you carry your trash with you and dispose off in a dustbin. This point is very close to Louisa Point and Echo Point; and similar to them, it is a very good subject to be captured through lens as it is rarely crowded. Hence, it gives the freedom to amateur photographers to experiment with different angles and lenses to capture a variety of pictures and improve their skill.

☛ Echo Point

Echo Point lies in the vicinity of Louisa Point, which can be seen from here. As the name suggests, you hear your screams and yells echo at this peak. High-pitched kids are a common sight here. We even saw adults going crazy to hear their voice back. We got to know about it when a group of almost 20 screaming people captured my attention. Funny, isn't it?

The vantage point offers the best view of the Western Ghats and is very crowded during daytime. So, it's advisable to visit here early in the morning. One of the best experiences we had here was crossing the valley by zip-lining. Mostly, zip-lining is offered by some local tour operators during the peak tourist season. There are a few stalls here that offer a variety of local food like vada pav and kandha poha, along with bottled water and soda. So, it's good to relax here for a while and admire nature in its full glory.

☛ Louisa Point

Louisa Point is almost 1.5 km away from the marketplace and will take around 20 minutes to reach here on foot. If it's a clear sunny day, this place will offer you breathtaking views that will compel you to settle down here for a moment. This is a unique point in Matheran as it offers two different picturesque views. From one point, you can see the sky touching the mountains and a civilisation located far in a valley. If you visit during monsoon, you'll also be captivated by waterfalls. Another view is of Lake Charlotte that looks like a diamond necklace when seen from here. Louisa Point also offers a clear view of Prabal Fort. All these different views are intriguing and one can spend hours gazing at them. We sat there, soaked in the beauty of the place and relishing moments of silence.

This place is known as a photographer's paradise in Matheran because it offers panoramic views of mountains, peaks, valleys, lake and waterfalls. In most of the travel portals, blogs and magazines, Matheran has been represented by using Louisa Point's pictures. During the peak season, photo points are a little crowded and sometimes you need to be patient for your view to be 'people free', but all your waiting time is worth those beautiful, dreamy and wallpaper pictures. Some people also stay at Louisa Point to watch the sunset.

☛ Sunrise Point

Sunrise Point, also known as Khandala Point, is located alongside the marketplace. This place is serene in the morning as very few people are able to make it to the sunrise. Sitting here quietly works wonders as you hear the chirping of birds, sound of breeze striking against trees and music composed by tree leaves. Our ancestors used to say that when you see a rising sun, it gives you tremendous energy. Sun rising above glorious mountains with golden reddish sky forming the backdrop unquestionably make for a beautiful sight and give you positive energy. I did yoga at sunrise for 20 minutes and definitely felt very energetic that day as compared to other days where I follow a different lifestyle. It's 5-15 minutes' walk from the marketplace, depending on the location of your hotel. Ask some local person or the receptionist of your hotel about sunrise time for the next day, before you go to bed at night. Sunrise time mentioned on the internet can be wrong sometimes and you obviously don't want to miss this sight. Videos recorded at sunrise are just perfect and can be used in any of your travel videos. I ended up with a shaky sunrise video because my view was obstructed by other photo enthusiasts and hands started trembling after a couple of minutes. So, I recommend taking your tripod along, if you intend to record the sunrise. While heading back to your hotel after seeing the sunrise, I would propose to indulge your taste buds in lip-smacking breakfast that has kandha poha and jalebi.



Mumbai to get India's first lighthouse tourist destination



It was a few months ago when I got a call from our young Minister of Shipping Milind Deora asking me if I would like to take a trip to the nearby Kanhoji Angre lighthouse, just off the coast of Mumbai.

He wanted to examine whether we could make the lighthouse into a tourist destination and asked if the Times of India would support the initiative. So we agreed to meet at 6 am at the Gateway of India and took a 40-minute boat ride to the island. Throughout the way, we could not help but marvel at the fact that our sea looked as beautiful as any other part of the world, but it was just that we had not seen its potential, as a country, to exploit it for tourism.

I was excited with the possibility of we Indians also getting an experience in our country that we otherwise, only see as tourists in other countries. Months after our visiting the island, the Ministry of Tourism has finally given its consent to the Ministry of Shipping and jointly, they have started to develop three lighthouses, that they have identified, into tourist destinations — Kanhoji Angre in Mumbai, the Dolphin's Nose in Vishakhapatnam and Mahabalipuram lighthouse about 40 kms south of Chennai. The first to be launched would be, of course, the one in Mumbai. We bring you excerpts of our exclusive conversation with the two ministers:

Dr K. Chiranjeevi, union Minister of state for tourism

Have you visited any of the international lighthouses?

Once as a brand ambassador of a beverage brand, I was supposed to shoot an ad in South Africa in a lighthouse. But I couldn't make it due to my tight schedule, but thanks to the graphics the ad showed me in the lighthouse and it looked



fantastic. Now, once these lighthouses are built, Milind and I can actually stand on the lighthouse and give a shot.

Are you enjoying being a minister as much as you enjoyed being an actor?

I enjoyed being an actor in the 30 years of my film career. After that, I think venturing into politics is a way to give back. I used to do some philanthropic work but with the political platform, I can contribute in a bigger way. On the lighter side, as an actor, your acting hours are limited but as a minister, it is unlimited. I remember when the Prime Minister appointed me, he said, 'We have rightfully chosen you as a tourism minister as you have enormous experience and you have gone all over the world as an actor, so you know how to enhance, uplift and encourage our tourism sector. You can be a brand ambassador for your ministry.' Our three big constraints for building tourism are connectivity, hygiene and the safety and security of our tourist places. Many countries find it difficult to get a visa and would like us to give them a visa on arrival. When I went to Spain, the tourism minister told me a lot of people want to come to India as they love Bollywood, but they don't have direct flights and find it difficult to get visas on arrival, that is currently offered to only citizens of nine countries. I am in talks with the home ministry to extend it to about 40 countries.

Your favourite holiday destination?

Internationally, I love going to Switzerland. I went there many times for my shooting and I loved the Alps, the tranquility, cleanliness, the greenery and the warmth of the people there. In India, there are lots of places that I love, but my favourite is Kashmir. Till the terrorism problem happened, for almost a decade, every summer I would be shooting there. I also like Goa, as it is happening and is lively and affordable. My family would always join me in the summer holidays when I shot in Kashmir.

A few months back, my family members went to Jammu and Kashmir for a holiday. I had planned to go but could not. They said they missed me as they got nostalgic remembering the times and places where they jumped, slid and sledged as kids. Just hearing this from them made me so happy.

Do you miss being a part of the film industry?

If Charan (Ram Charan) was not there, I would have missed it. But I have no regrets since he took over and I feel connected to films through him. He is hard-working and focused and I am happy that he is no longer the brat that he was as a child.

Milind Deora, Minister of state for shipping

What excited you to develop these lighthouses?

Our ministry runs 180 lighthouses along the coastline of India. They are important navigational tools for ships, but I realised that they can become important tourist destinations. And of the three we have identified, India's first will be developed just off the coast of Mumbai. It's a unique lighthouse and you have to sail to the island that makes it attractive for tourists. It's a historical island with a fort built around it by Kanhoji Angre. We feel that the partnership with the ministry of tourism should have happened a long time ago. But, better late than never.

These are beautiful assets waiting to be exploited for tourism. When I studied in Boston, I saw that the entire east coast of America has a number of lighthouses. It adds a full maritime experience and Europe and US do it naturally and very well. If we can recreate that in India, we can attract a lot of tourists both from India and abroad. Mumbai is one of the best coastal cities and this is the most underutilised asset we have. We live in Mumbai, but don't even know what it is like to go to the sea. People around the world appreciate it, look after it well and even exploit it as a government. To me, it is exciting, personally and professionally.

Your favourite holiday destination?

Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It's just by default that I have become minister of shipping, but I love the sea, I love swimming and diving.

Rediscovering the wonders of Pune



Heritage and history have always been a part of the city's charm. Over the next few days, we will showcase what we believe to be our city's 15 wonders. We have also organised visits to some of these heritage destinations.

Nana Wada

History: The Nana Wada, built in 1780, adopting Gothic structures, used to be the home of Nanasaheb Phadnavis, an influential minister and statesman of the Maratha empire during the Peshwa administration. This wada is a large six-quadrangled, perimeter-protected construction. Back then, the Krishna river used to flow beside the Nana Wada, which had steps leading to the river. The Nana Wada has been a preferred location for many Bollywood filmmakers to shoot their movies. Mrityudand, Goonj Uthi Shehnai, Jis Desh Me Ganga Rehata Hai, and Swades are a just a few such examples.

To see: Among the things to look out for are the few temples behind the Nana Wada that have beautiful Peshwai pictures on their walls. Another interesting thing is a huge bell housed in the temple premises which was won by the Peshwas in the war of Vasai in 1707 against the British. Nana Wada can be visited from 11 am to 6 pm daily.

University of Pune

History: The main building of the University of Pune was made in 1864. During the British Raj, it was the official residence of the governor of Bombay and post-independence, the building was restored for academic and official purposes.

Inspired by Prince Albert Osborne's house on the Isle of Wight, it was built at a cost of around 1,75,000 Sterling Pound, which was nearly six times the amount raised by the sale of the previous Governor's residence.

To see: A little ahead of the building is a small pond, with a stone prison right in the middle of it. During the British era, crocodiles were kept in the pond that surrounded the prisoners in their cells. The University can be visited between 8 am-6 pm with prior permission.

Parvati

History: Located at a height of 2,100 feet above sea level, Parvati is one of the highest points in the city and gives an excellent panoramic bird's eye view of Pune. The Parvati houses a temple complex and one needs to climb and a total of 103 steps to reach the top. The main temple was built by Shrimant Nana Saheb Peshwa in 1749 and was visited by the Prince of Wales, Albert Edward, during his visit to India in 1875. Apart from its historical importance, it is also a hot favourite among fitness enthusiasts, who come here daily for their morning and evening walks.

To see: Other than the temple, the complex also has a museum housing artefacts from the Peshwa period. The Parvati gates are open for the general public from 5.00 am to 8.00 pm.

Krakow: Cultural capital of Poland



Krakow is the cultural capital of Poland. It's history goes back to the 4th century. It is considered one of the most beautiful cities of Eastern Europe and is on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Its cobbled streets, beautiful monuments, streets filled with music and art and charming old square make it a wonderful option for an enchanting history rich getaway.

How to get there

By Air

All leading airlines fly from Delhi, Bangalore and Mumbai to Krakow, via Frankfurt, Moscow, Berlin or several other destinations in Europe. It also has a direct connection to several European cities and would make a good base for exploring the rest of the continent.

By Bus

Buses and trams make it easy to travel around Krakow, though you can happily walk for large parts of the city. You can buy tickets at ticket machines or on board. Keep change handy. For ease of travel, pick up the Krakow Tourist Card that gives you free travel on buses and trams. It comes in 60zl and 80zl denomination with two or three day validity. http://www.krakow.pl/english/6243,artykul,krakow_tourist_card.html

Where to stay

There are enough stay options in Krakow. You can choose from star hotels to boutique hotels, apartments and hostels. I stayed at the Sheraton, which gives a wonderful view of the river and castle. For apartments, check out www.apartmentcracow.com. For Dorm accommodations, try The Secret Garden Hostel (www.thesecretgarden.pl). You'll also find well known chains like Novotel and Radisson and Ibis.

Food

There are lots of options. Try a traditional Polish Milk Bar or a traditional brewery for the authentic local experience. If you can afford it, try a restaurant called Wierzynek. It's been around since 1364 (really) and hosted royal banquets!

Places of Interest

Plenty! Though it saw the worst of Nazis, Krakow was fortunate to not be completely destroyed during WWII. The Old Town is a historic location, as is Kazimierz (former Jewish Quarter). Old Town must visits include the majestic Wawel Castle, Cloth Hall (a merchant's market since the middle ages), St Mary's Basilica and the Town Hall Tower.

The Royal castle on Wawel Hill includes a Cathedral as well, apart from other treasures inside its fortified walls.

Kazimierz has a sad history as Jews were persecuted here by the Nazis during World War II. A large number of Jews were saved by the businessman Oskar Schindler, made famous in the movie Schindler's List.You can now visit Schindler's Enamelware Factory in Kazimierz. Kazimierz is also home to several churches, synagogues and museums and makes for a good walking tour.

Wieliczka Salt Mines: Built in the 13th century, these were one of the oldest salt mines still in operation until 2007. You can see statues, chapels and other things crafted out of rock salt.

Krakow offers some interesting tours. One is a cycling tour of the city (http://www.cooltourcompany.com/). The other is a communist tour of Krakow as it was a East European communist hub. Try http://www.crazyguides.com/krakow_tours/. They take you in a cool communist era vehicle called Trabant, making it complete. You can also do a tour of the Jewish quarter and some of these are free!

More than the sights, the best experience in Krakow is to park yourself in the old town square, in one of the many open air restaurants and hear music being played and take in the general joie de vivre.

Visit Planty Park and play chess on one of the available boards. You can also catch festivals, fireworks and other events by the river.

Closure Line

Though not on top of the regular Indian travel list, Krakow is a wonderful getaway that is rich both in history and the relaxed yet lively experience it offers. Make this part of your Europe itinerary and you won't regret it.

Buses below BS-VI standards to be diverted at borders to curb pollution

Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi Traffic Police will divert non-compliant inter-city and inter-state buses at the national capital's borders to curb pollution and prevent traffic congestion, allowing only electric, CNG and BS-VI diesel buses to operate, an official said. The decision was taken at an inter-state coordination meeting chaired by Special Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Ajay Chaudhary to ensure effective implementation of Stage-I of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) and directions issued by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM).

Representatives of concerned



departments, civic agencies and police authorities from neighbouring states and districts attended the meeting.

"Only electric vehicles, CNG and BS-VI diesel buses would be permitted to operate, subject to prescribed conditions. Non-compliant buses must be stopped and diverted at the borders, as turning them back after they enter Delhi leads to congestion and additional pollution," the Delhi Traffic Police statement said.

The meeting also reviewed restrictions on vehicles registered outside Delhi from November 1, 2026, to January 31, 2027, subject to notified exemptions. The official said prominent display boards would be installed at Delhi's borders to inform motorists about the restrictions. Joint enforcement teams may also be constituted to ensure compliance.

Second phase of Census to commence from Jan 10

Delhi.(Agency)

The second phase of Census 2027 in the capital is likely to begin on January 10, with a 15-day window for self-enumeration ahead of the house-to-house exercise starting January 25, senior officials said.

The self-enumeration window will run from January 10 to 24, followed by field operations from January 25 to February 28. A revisional round is scheduled from March 1 to 5. A senior official said a meeting to discuss the second phase of the exercise is scheduled for next Thursday. The meeting will be chaired by the Delhi Chief Secretary and attended by census officials.

The first phase of Census 2027 in Delhi concluded on June 14, covering nearly 76 lakh houses and around 55 lakh households. Enumerators recorded that more than 2.3 crore people were ordinarily residing in the city, officials said.

The population enumeration phase will require citizens to answer 40 questions covering various parameters, including caste, religion, education, occupation, migration and parents' particulars. Caste will be captured for the first time since the 1931 Census. The questionnaire will seek personal details, including name, sex, date of birth, age, marital status and relationship to the head of the household. It will also cover nationality, religion, Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe status, disability, mother tongue and other languages known.

Respondents will be asked about their educational qualifications, employment status, occupation, industry and class of worker. Questions on migration will cover birthplace, place of last residence, reason for migration and duration of stay at the current address.

The questionnaire will also seek family and financial details, including the number of children and bank accounts, and whether respondents have a mobile phone number, Aadhaar number, voter ID or passport. Aadhaar and other identification details will be sought only if available, and providing Aadhaar details will be voluntary. The exercise will also cover parents' date and place of birth. The census manual outlines procedures for house numbering, preparation of layout maps, enumeration of homeless people and the roles of enumerators and supervisors.

MCD members nearly come to blows as BJP-AAP councillors clash over funds, air pollution

Delhi.(Agency)

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) House witnessed chaotic scenes on Thursday, with councillors throwing papers, damaging microphones and nearly coming to blows. Mayor Parvesh Wahi tried to restore order and even announced additional development funds of Rs 25 lakh for each ward, but the Opposition remained unconvinced. The session was eventually adjourned, with marshals escorting the mayor to safety.

The chaos began when BJP and AAP councillors clashed during a discussion on the capital's worsening air pollution and cleanliness. Soon after the mayor introduced the debate, AAP councillors demanded the immediate release of Rs 1 crore in development funds for their wards, triggering an uproar.

Wahi announced an immediate allocation of Rs 25 lakh and said Rs 2 crore would be made available to councillors during the current financial year. The Opposition rejected the announcement and pressed for a higher immediate allocation. During the heated exchange, Wahi said, "I am giving you Rs 25 lakh at least; you never gave anybody anything."

Sloganeering intensified as AAP councillors moved towards the well of the House, forcing a five-minute adjournment.

When the House reconvened, the discussion turned to Delhi's air pollution, with Opposition members questioning the civic body's efforts to tackle the crisis. The exchange escalated, with BJP and AAP councillors threatening physical confrontation. Wahi allowed AAP leader of opposition Ankush Narang to speak, but the proceedings were disrupted by "chor chor" slogans and Narang's criticism of the BJP-led "four-engine" government. Congress leaders also took jibes at Narang, with party leader Naziya Danish telling him to go to Goa instead of the MCD House.

The uproar intensified when Danish took a dig at AAP councillor Shagufta

- BJP and AAP councillors clashed during a debate on air pollution and cleanliness, as AAP members demanded Rs 1 crore in ward development funds.



Zubair's religious values, triggering a verbal spat. Zubair tried to snatch the microphone from Danish and attempted to break the microphone at the mayor's chair. Members began throwing water and files, further disrupting the proceedings.

Wahi condemned the disruption by AAP councillors, accusing them of obstructing discussions on sanitation and air pollution. He said 2,500 additional sanitation workers would be deployed for three months ahead of the festive season, while each councillor would receive Rs 25 lakh for ward development. The matter has been referred to the House disciplinary committee for action. Wahi said suspensions would follow if recommended by the committee.

Suspensions if committee recommends: Mayor

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'Black Coat' stir at Jamia for elections

Delhi.(Agency)

Students gathered in large numbers on Thursday for a general body meeting demanding the restoration of the Jamia Millia Islamia Students' Union (JMISU) and the announcement of an election schedule. The meeting at Ghalib Lawn was followed by a march in which students wore black coats, as the agitation on the campus intensified.

The mobilisation came a day after the university administration constituted a panel to reconstitute the students' union. The varsity authorities also organised a counter march against the ongoing agitation. However, the students said the hunger strike would



continue until the university notified the election schedule. The meeting, called by several student organisations in support of the ongoing hunger strike, saw the participation of hundreds. Resolutions concerning the future structure and functioning of the union also surfaced in the meeting.

The protest assumes political significance as it drew leaders from different parties, with Congress MP Imran Pratapgarhi and National Students' Union of India (NSUI) president Vinod Jakhar visiting the campus. AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan also met Vice-Chancellor Mazhar Asif to raise the students' demands. The students' mobilisation comes amid renewed pressure on the university to restore the elected representative body, whose elections have remained discontinued since 2006.

A day of gridlock across Delhi-NCR, as Old RTR flyover undergoes repair

Next to the RTR flyover, traffic has also come to a complete halt at Arjun Path. At five points on the 6-km stretch, traffic has been halted for as long as 20 minutes.

Delhi.(Agency)

It is 1 pm. At Sadar Bazar Cantonment Metro station, Google Maps estimates a 35-minute drive to the Old Rao Tula Ram (RTR) flyover. Twenty-five minutes later, the estimate remains unchanged. Nagender (51), an autorickshaw driver who lives in Dwarka Sector 14, shakes his head in frustration. Traffic around him is barely moving.

"There is never this much crowd here. Whoever stepped out today got stuck. For 25 minutes, the map has been showing 35 minutes. We are completely standing still. It shows 21 minutes for 2 km," he says.

Next to the RTR flyover, traffic has also come to a complete halt at Arjun Path. At five points on the 6-km stretch, traffic has been halted for as long as 20 minutes. in accessing educational opportunities. A drive that usually takes less than 20 minutes takes Nagender an hour. The issue: Temporary closure of the Old RTR flyover carriageway towards Vasant Vihar since Wednesday, after cracks were detected at two locations. The carriageway is likely to remain shut until Sunday-Monday, with motorists diverted onto the adjoining service road. "When I came to Delhi in 1992, there was nothing here. There was no flyover, and today the jam is happening only because one flyover is closed," Nagender says. The flyover is a key link for traffic from Indira Gandhi International Airport towards Vasant Vihar and South Delhi. It is also important for commuters travelling from Gurgaon to South Delhi, many of whom continue onwards to Noida and other NCR cities. Though barely 900 m long, it carries nearly two lakh vehicles a day, according to Delhi Traffic Police officers. A senior officer said personnel spotted the cracks and immediately alerted the Public Works Department. The traffic police also updated Google Maps to reflect the closure and diversion. At the repair site, Ram Swarup, a supervisor, says, "The repair work will be completed today. But curing work is going on and concrete will take time to gain strength." Curing refers to keeping freshly-poured concrete, brick masonry or plaster continuously wet. Traffic police officers said the flyover is likely to reopen by Sunday night or Monday morning.



Shankar Mohan, a worker at the site, says he has never seen the stretch so crowded. As a truck rolls past, he climbs aboard, followed by other workers. "The truck won't stop here today. We will have to run. If it stops, then there will be a jam here too. Not a single vehicle can stop even for a second today," he says. The closure of the flover has disrupted traffic across Delhi-NCR. National Highway 48 towards Mahipalpur and the Mehrauli-Gurgaon (MG) Road corridor are under pressure following restrictions on traffic between Gurgaon and Delhi. Traffic was heavy through the morning on Thursday but intensified between 7 pm and 8 pm, officials said. According to a Gurugram Traffic Police advisory, only passenger vehicles headed to Delhi Airport can use NH 48 towards Mahipalpur. Other vehicles have been advised to take alternative routes, with South Delhi-bound traffic directed via IFFCO Chowk and MG Road, entering Delhi through the Aya Nagar border or the Bandhwari toll route. Officials said additional traffic personnel were deployed to manage the congestion, with four to five officers stationed at each junction.Avinash (27), who is delivering materials to the World Trade Centre, says he has already spent two hours on the road. "It's completely jammed from Mahipalpur. The situation is really bad. I don't know how much more time it will take ahead," he adds.

Empty walls, lone Tiranga pic: What's left at Raihan Vadra's exhibition at Bikaner House

Delhi.(Agency)

The controversy had already drawn attention to Raihan Vadra's exhibition, No Idea Is Final, before I walked into Bikaner House. But what greeted me inside was not just an exhibition of photographs. It was a room full of absences.

Visitors, many of them young, were streaming in. Some had come after seeing the controversy unfold on social media; others were curious about what remained of a show from which dozens of photographs documenting recent protests and youth movements in Delhi had been removed. "It is really sad that we couldn't see that. We know what's been taken away. Now I'm here to see what's really been left behind," said Sakshi, 27. "It's uncomfortable**,** really. I've been coming to Bikaner House for five years, and this incident puts it in a different light."

Vadra was also at the exhibition. He said he had not expected the reaction that followed the removal of the photographs.

A TALE OF TWO FLOORS

The journey begins on the first floor, where the gallery offers a tranquil escape into nature. Brightly lit walls display serene landscapes and vivid wildlife photographs capturing raw wilderness, towering mountains and tranquil forests

"That's how I got into photography-wildlife photography," Raihan Vadra said, discussing the origins of his artistic journey. "And, you know, it's one of my passions. So with this exhibition, I really just wanted to put out images that I liked." But it was the second floor, with its red walls, that made the controversy impossible to ignore. Nails remained where photographs had once hung. The walls were largely bare, with lights illuminating spaces that had been intended to hold images. The Preamble to the Constitution, with its references to liberty and justice, was written along the walls. The emptiness was difficult to miss. It was also difficult to separate from the circumstances in which it had appeared.

"I would have liked to say that this is



intentional, the nails and the projections, but it's not," Vadra told me. "This is just like we didn't even have time, you know. They gave us till 4 pm yesterday and the exhibition was opening at 7 pm."

The blank spaces were not originally conceived as an artistic statement, he explained. They were the result of a last-minute removal that left the team with little time to prepare the exhibition for visitors. Walking through the room, Nikhil Jain, another visitor, saw the absence itself as a statement.

Delhi HC refuses to restore water, power connections of Race Course Masjid

Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi High Court, on October 15, refused to restore electricity and water connections to Race Course Masjid, a Waqf-notified property and a Grade II heritage structure notified in 2009, after the utilities were disconnected on October 7. The masjid is located inside the Race Course Club. The club, spread over around 53 acres near the Prime Minister's residence at 7, Lok Kalyan Marg, and the slums around it are facing eviction following multiple rounds of litigation. The Centre has cited "national security" to justify taking possession of the area. However, sources in the Government said on Thursday that no eviction notice had been sent to the mosque. The masjid's imam, Mohd Haroon, who lives in a 'hujra' on the premises, moved HC on October 12 after the utility connections were disconnected. On October 8, the Delhi Waqf Board had written to the NDMC executive engineer seeking the restoration of the utilities, stating that the same had been disconnected without "any prior notice or apparent valid reason" despite all dues being paid. The Board also said the connections had been in place lawfully for decades. On October 15, NDMC refused to restore the utilities. It said that "since demolition work is still going on" in the area, which involves demolition of the jhuggi structures, "and there is an element of public harm involved, the electricity connection cannot be restored".

Also, according to NNDMC, the Land and Development Office (L&DO), the authority overseeing the demolition and set to take possession of the land, had not been made a party to the petition. While the masjid was not a party to the litigation concerning the eviction of around 700 slum dwellers and the Race Course Club, the NDMC's counsel orally told the court that the masjid's premises were



"covered" by a HC judgment dated August 25. The August judgment had paved the way for the eviction of slum dwellers living near the Prime Minister's residence on Race Course Road. They have since been rehabilitated in Savda Ghevra, nearly 50 km away.

Justice Saurabh Banerjee dismissed the imam's petition on October 15, citing the NDMC's submissions and other factors. The court noted that the Waqf Board, described as the "original occupant" of the premises, had not challenged the disconnection of electricity. It also observed that Haroon, as an imam appointed by the Board, had no right to the premises and thus could not claim a violation of his fundamental rights on account of the disconnection.

Sensex, Nifty open higher as IT stocks rally; crude oil above $113 caps gains

New Delhi.(Agency)

Stock markets opened higher on Friday after three consecutive sessions of losses, with information technology stocks leading the recovery amid a global sell-off in AI-linked shares. However, gains remained limited as crude oil prices climbed above $113 a barrel amid escalating tensions in the Middle East, keeping investors cautious about inflation and India's economic outlook.The BSE Sensex was trading at 73,547.36, up 297.97 points or 0.41%, around 9:30 am. The NSE Nifty 50 rose 44.35 points, or 0.20%, to 22,732.The rebound follows a three-session decline during which the benchmark indices lost around 2%. Investors are weighing improving sentiment towards Indian IT stocks against the risks posed by rising oil prices and continued weakness in the broader market.

IT STOCKS LEAD THE RECOVERY

The Nifty IT index rose 2.04% in early trade, making it the strongest-performing sectoral index in the supplied snapshot. Infosys gained 0.16%, while several other IT stocks supported the sector's recovery.

163% returns generated in 3 years: This AMC is offering dividend of ₹9.50 too; see details

Kolkata.(Ajency)

Nippon Life India Asset Management Shares stood at Rs 976.00, down 2.40% on Thursday (Oct 22). The company announced its results for the Q2FY27 period. Along with the Q2 FY27 results, the AMC also announced an interim dividend for the financial year 2026-27. The company's Board of Directors declared an interim dividend of Rs 9.50 per equity share (with a face value of Rs 10) amounting to 95% of the face value. The company has also set a 'record date' to determine the eligibility of shareholders to receive the dividend.

Dividend record date

Nippon Life India AMC has set Wednesday, October 28, as the record date. This means that investors must hold these shares before Wednesday to be eligible for the dividend.

Nippon Life India Asset Management Q2 results

On Thursday, Nippon Life India Asset Management reported that its net profit after tax (PAT) for the September quarter of the 2026-27 financial year declined by 6% year-on-year to Rs 324.4 crore.

Beware of stock tips on fraudulent WhatsApp groups: Sebi warns against 'astroturfing'

Kolkata.(Ajency)

Stock tips circulating on WhatsApp groups are dangerous to follow, capital markets regulator Sebi has told investors. In a statement, Sebi has stated that unregistered persons were offering stock recommendations to investors through WhatsApp groups in the name of free investor education. These groups are based on invitation. The operators of these fraudulent groups often pose as market experts. "To make these calls look credible, certain members, acting in concert with the operators, post false claims of profit and praise the 'expert'. This practice, known as astroturfing, creates a false impression of genuine support and induces unsuspecting investors to act on the call," Sebi said.New tactic used by WhatsApp groups

Sebi has warned investors by flagging a tactic used by such fraudulent groups after enforcement agencies or regulatory bodies take action against them.

Swiggy shares crash 12% to record low: Why is the stock falling so sharply

New Delhi.(Agency)

Swiggy shares plunged nearly 12% on Friday, hitting a record low as investors grew concerned about mounting losses in its quick-commerce business Instamart and the cost of competing in India's crowded instant-delivery market. the availability of global supplies.The stock fell to an intraday low of Rs 184.90, down Rs 26.40, or 12.49%, from its previous close of Rs 211.30. It was trading at Rs 186.15, down 11.90%, in the latest available snapshot.Swiggy shares have been under sustained pressure. As of 9:50 am on October 23, the stock was down 19.51% over the past five trading sessions, 33.27% over the past month and 36.58% over the past six months. The decline has been even steeper in 2026 so far, with the stock falling 52.43% year to date to Rs 185.85.The sharp decline comes after Swiggy reported wider losses at Instamart for the September quarter, putting profitability back in focus as the company continues to expand its quick-commerce operations. The stock's fall also follows investor scrutiny of rival Eternal's results this week.Here are three key reasons behind the sharp fall in Swiggy shares.

INSTAMART'S LOSSES WIDEN

The biggest concern is the widening loss at Instamart, Swiggy's quick-commerce business. Its adjusted core loss increased to Rs 895 crore in the September quarter from Rs 849 crore a year earlier.Quick-commerce companies are expanding rapidly by setting up small warehouses, known as dark stores, to enable deliveries within minutes. While the model can drive order growth, expanding the network and competing for customers can put pressure on profitability.Investors are increasingly looking for evidence that growth in orders and sales can translate into improving unit economics. Wider losses raise questions about how much Swiggy may need to spend before Instamart can become sustainably profitable.



INTENSE COMPETITION KEEPS PROFITABILITY IN FOCUS

Swiggy and rival Eternal have been expanding their dark-store networks as quick commerce becomes an increasingly important growth driver. But aggressive expansion and competition are keeping costs and profitability under scrutiny.Investors are assessing whether sustained growth in order values, better customer retention and higher store utilisation can eventually improve margins.Brokerage Emkay said sustained double-digit sequential growth in Instamart's net order value, alongside improvements in customer retention, monetisation and store utilisation, could support a higher valuation for the stock.The concern is that growth alone may not be enough if the cost of acquiring customers, fulfilling orders and expanding the network continues to weigh on earnings.

BROKERAGES CUT TARGET PRICES

Brokerages remain positive on Swiggy's longer-term potential, but their lower target prices reflect concerns about the pace of profitability improvement.Jefferies maintained its 'buy' rating but cut its target price to Rs 330 from Rs 435. The brokerage flagged Instamart's losses as a key concern, while arguing that Swiggy's current share price did not fully reflect the value of its food-delivery business and cash holdings.

Nifty needs 16% returns to reclaim January peak

New Delhi.(Agency)

India's equity benchmark Nifty 50 index still requires about 16 per cent more upside to fully recover to its peak of 26,329 recorded earlier in January this year, a report said on Friday. The report from Abakkus Mutual Fund said that the Nifty 50 had risen 1.7 per cent to 22,716 as of September 30, 2026 from its March 2026 low of 22,331.The headline index has undergone 10–20 per cent corrections 13 times since inception or roughly once every three years and historically recovers to previous peaks in nearly 91 days on average.The longest recovery period occurred between the March 2025 crash and January 2026, when the Nifty 50 made its last all-time high, the report added.

Investors who stayed invested in equity markets from April 2005 to September 2026 recorded higher returns than those who missed being invested by a few days.Staying fully invested throughout the period of April 2005 to September 2026 in the Nifty 50 TRI delivered a robust compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 13.19 per cent.However, missing just the 5 best days dragged the returns down to a CAGR of 10.86 per cent, the report said. Returns flatlined to a CAGR of 0.66 per cent for investors who missed the best 50 days, it added.



A recent report from brokerage Bernstein said Nifty 50 is likely to touch 25,000 in December 2026 down from the previous 26,000 target, adding that reduction in long-term capital gains (LTCG) alone cannot trigger sustained foreign institutional investor (FII) inflows.It reduced the target due to a macroeconomic backdrop, elevated crude oil prices and supply-chain pressures, weighing on the markets along with a lack of meaningful earnings upgrades.

India-EU trade pact may come into force in 4-5 months: Goyal

New Delhi.(Ajency)

The India-European Union free trade agreement (FTA) could come into force in the next four to five months, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday, urging Indian and German businesses to prepare to tap the opportunities once the pact becomes operational..Goyal, who is leading a 100-member business delegation to Germany, said the agreement, whose negotiations were concluded in January, would move rapidly towards signing. He expressed hope that it would be signed before the end of this year."It (the agreement) will move very rapidly towards signature. Closure was announced on January 27 this year... after going through the process of (EU) Parliament, entire 27 nations have unanimously supported," he said."I would not be surprised if... (in the) next four or five months, it will be operational. Which is why such a large business delegation has accompanied me," he added.The minister urged businesses on both sides to begin exchanging product samples, discussing quality requirements and pricing, and identifying potential customers and partners so they could maximise the benefits of the agreement once it comes into effect.Addressing an event here, Goyal also called for an ambitious bilateral trade target of 310 billion euros between India and Germany, against the current level of around 31 billion euros.

"An eminent mathematician in India invented the word zero... it was invented by Aryabhata in India. We have 31 billion euros (bilateral trade at present).. . if we were to be able to add a zero to that, make it three hundred and ten (310), how would that sound?" he said.

He said the target would require businesses to identify sectors where the two countries could complement each other's strengths.

develop concrete plans and deepen cooperation.Goyal said Germany's strengths in precision engineering, technical skills and quality could complement India's infrastructure, digital capabilities and skilled workforce. He also called for greater collaboration in apprenticeship and skilling programmes, green transition and emerging technologies.

Retiring at 58? Know how long your EPF savings will earn interest

New Delhi.(Agency)

Retirement at 58 does not mean you have to withdraw your Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) savings immediately. You can leave the money in your account for some time and continue earning interest. However, there is a limit to how long the interest will be credited, and missing this window could affect your retirement planning.The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has addressed this question in a post on X, explaining how long a retired employee's EPF account continues to earn interest and when it is advisable to withdraw the accumulated savings.In its post, EPFO asked subscribers to understand the rules on interest after retirement.

HOW LONG DOES YOUR EPF ACCOUNT EARN INTEREST AFTER RETIREMENT?

According to the information shared by EPFO, an employee who retires at the age of 58 can continue earning interest on their EPF balance for the next three years, up to the age of 61.This means retirees do not have to withdraw their entire EPF savings as soon as they turn 58 to continue earning interest. They can leave the money in the account during this three-year period and earn interest on the eligible balance.

However, once the account becomes inoperative after this period, it will no longer earn interest, as explained in EPFO's graphic.The organisation has advised retirees to withdraw their EPF savings rather than leave the money in an inoperative account beyond the period for which interest is credited.

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR EPF ACCOUNT AFTER 61?

For employees who retire at 58, the three-year period provides some time to decide how to use their retirement savings. But leaving the money untouched beyond the age of 61 may mean losing the benefit of further interest on the EPF balance.For instance, someone who retires at 58 and leaves their accumulated savings in the account can continue earning interest until the age of 61, according to EPFO's post. After that, the account becomes inoperative and interest is no longer credited.

Rupee rises 3 paise to 94.78 against US dollar in early trade



Mumbai . (Agency)

The rupee traded in a narrow range and edged up 3 paise to 94.78 against the US dollar in early trade on Friday amid elevated crude oil prices and foreign fund outflows.Forex traders said rupee is under pressure amid persistent macroeconomic headwinds, including global dollar strength and Brent crude prices hovering near USD 113 per barrel.At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 94.78, registering a gain of 3 paise over its previous close.On Thursday, the rupee closed at 94.81 against the American currency.Foreign investors turned cautious seeking safe-haven greenback assets amid elevated US Treasury yields, said Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP.

AI in sports video 2AI in sports video 2Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 101.64, higher by 0.04 per cent.Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading higher by 0.42 per cent at USD 113.65 per barrel in futures tradeSensex rose 343.48 points to 73,592.87, while Nifty gained 41.65 points to 22,729.30.Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 3,458.70 crore on a net basis on Thursday, according to exchange data.

District action plans to maximise FTA benefits in two months

New Delhi.(Ajency)

Commerce ministry plans to roll out district action plans across all states within the next two months to help exporters, particularly small businesses, make better use of the free trade agreements (FTAs) signed by India in recent years, official sources said.

The ministry will conduct workshops in every state to familiarise exporters with the benefits available under these agreements and help them tap the support offered by export promotion councils (EPCs)."We are currently holding meetings in every state to design a district action plan so that all 760 districts can leverage the benefits of FTAs. The idea is to involve exporters from states as much as possible, and we are taking it down to the cutting-edge level. This will help districts become export hubs," an official said.India has signed nine FTAs in recent years, covering 38 countries, with the latest agreement with New Zealand being implemented on October 20. While several agreements have come into force, helping exporters, particularly smaller firms, take advantage of preferential market access remains a challenge."There will be workshops in every state, and all these plans will be implemented within the next two months. The problem is that the benefits offered by export promotion councils often do not reach exporters, who are frequently unaware of them," the official said.The government has held consultations with exporters in the past to encourage greater use of FTAs. The district-level initiative seeks to take this effort further by identifying products that can be promoted in international markets and helping businesses understand the opportunities available in partner countries.India has signed trade agreements with several countries and regions in recent years, including the UAE, Australia, the UK and Oman, while negotiations are under way with countries such as Chile, Peru and the European Union.

However, trade balances with some FTA partners underline the need to improve export performance and make better use of market access. India's merchandise trade deficit stood at $6.5 billion with Australia and $26.52 billion with the UAE in FY 2025-26, according to official data. The deficit with New Zealand was $22.5 million.Exporters have also been asked to identify products specific to their respective states and districts that could be developed as areas of specialisation for international markets.To coordinate the initiative and help exporters prepare, the government is likely to set up a body comprising officials from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) and the Department of Commerce, along with representatives of export promotion councils and industry associations.

Boats kept ready in Anna Nagar, Velachery as Chennai braces for rain

CHENNAI.(Agency)

With the two new weather systems forming in the Bay of Bengal, boats have been kept ready in Velachery and Anna Nagar to evacuate people from low-lying areas in the event of flooding, with the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) deploying 36 boats and the Fisheries Department keeping another 97 boats on standby, GCC commissioner GS Sameeran said on Thursday.

Briefing reporters after inspecting a relief centre at the community hall in Pattinapakkam and a community kitchen at Padavattamman Koil Street in Royapuram, the commissioner said the civic body had made extensive arrangements to tackle the northeast monsoon, including preparing 227 relief centres and 112 community kitchens across its 15 zones.The relief centres have been equipped with essential supplies, including mats, bedsheets and pillows, while the kitchens have stocked provisions to prepare food. The corporation has stored 12,399 kg of rice, 2,355 kg of dal, 1,590 litres of cooking oil and 696 kg of salt, with additional supplies to be procured if required.

Andhra Pradesh's groundwater levels fall 3.17 metres year-on-year

VISAKHAPATNAM.(Agency)

El Nino-induced deficit monsoon has taken a toll on groundwater levels in Andhra Pradesh, with the State recording an average decline of 3.17 metres compared with the corresponding period last year, with Rayalaseema recording a sharper fall than Coastal Andhra, according to district-wise real-time groundwater data as on October 22, 2026. The average groundwater level in the State stood at 10.23 metres below ground level (m bgl), compared with 7.06 metres on October 22, 2025. In Rayalaseema, the average depth increased from 7.82 metres to 13.67 metres, a decline of 5.85 metres.

Coastal Andhra recorded a smaller year-on-year (YoY) decline of 2.09 metres, with the average depth increasing from 6.76 metres to 8.85 metres.Among the districts, Sri Sathya Sai recorded the steepest Year-over-year (YoY) decline of 11.06 metres, with the average groundwater level falling from 9.74 metres to 20.80 metres. Annamayya recorded the second-largest decline at 9.06 metres, followed by Markapuram at 6.38 metres and Eluru at 5.66 metres.

Jamboo Savari: 4-year-old in ICU with head injury after police cane crowd

MYSURU.(Agency)

A four-year-old boy, who was watching the Dasara Jamboo Savari procession with his parents, sustained a serious head injury when police resorted to lathicharge to control the crowd at Highway Circle in Mysuru on Wednesday evening. The child, Shishira, is undergoing treatment in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at a private hospital.One of the family members of the boy, Girish, told TNIE that police personnel resorted to caning during the procession to control the crowd, and a baton struck the boy on the head. The shocked parents rushed the profusely bleeding child to the hospital where doctors provided emergency treatment. The child reportedly required stitches.

"We brought our child to watch the Dasara. Was it necessary to wield a lathi against a small child?" Girish said, adding that doctors told them that they have to perform a surgery to ensure that there was no blood clot. Former MP and BJP leader Pratap Simha visited hospital and enquired about the boy. Simha said he spoke to the deputy commissioner who promised that the medical costs of the boy will be covered under the CSR funds of the hospital.

Meanwhile, a complaint has been registered at NR police station. Police commissioner Seema Latkar issued a press statement saying that a through investigation will be conducted into the issue.

Another doctor assaulted in Maharashtra, this time in front of 5 policemen

The slapping incident took place at the Wardha health centre, where Dr Shraddha Bhumre was on duty

Mumbai.(Agency)

A woman medical officer was allegedly slapped by a man brought by police for a medical examination at a primary health centre in Talegaon Shyamji Pant village in Maharashtra's Wardha district, Ashti tehsil, triggering protests by the government medical officers. The slapping incident took place at the Wardha health centre, where Dr Shraddha Bhumre was on duty. Threatening an OPD shutdown, the doctors have demanded strict action against the accused and the police personnel accompanying him. The incident has brought back memories of doctors' assault at a Thane hospital in July 2026, renewing concerns over the safety of doctors on duty.



The accused, identified as Qadir Ali Razzaq Ali, a resident of the same village with a history of multiple criminal cases, had been brought to the facility by police personnel for a medical examination before being produced at a court. After the medical examination, police asked the accused to sign documents. After signing, he allegedly slapped Dr Bhumre, prompting the police personnel to restrain the man.

The incident has sparked anger among government medical officers. Members of the Gazetted Medical Officers' Association met Wardha District Collector Vanmathi C and submitted a memorandum expressing their concerns. The matter has also been brought to the notice of the state-level association, MAGMO. The district association, after consultations with state-level representatives, alleged that the five police personnel accompanying the accused had failed to take adequate precautions to prevent the assault, raising concerns about negligence in the discharge of their duties. The association has demanded that stringent criminal charges be invoked against the accused and that appropriate action be taken against the police personnel concerned. It has warned that outpatient department (OPD) services will remain shut until action is taken.

As Mumbai chokes and swelters, 7,633 trees cleared for removal in five months

Of the 7,633 trees cleared, 3,502 will be felled for good. The approvals came from a civic panel that's back after nearly four years but still has none of its nominated members, and Mumbai hasn't completed a tree census since 2011.

Mumbai .(Agency)

In a city grappling with plummeting air quality and rising heat, over 7,500 trees are set to face the axe to make way for civic infrastructure projects as well as private redevelopment works.

The permissions to fell 7,633 trees have been granted over five months by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) Tree Authority, which was constituted back to power in April after a hiatus of nearly four years. Of the total permissions granted, the Tree Authority, which safeguards Mumbai's green cover by regulating permissions for tree felling and plantation in Mumbai, has granted approvals to permanently cut 3,502 trees while 4,131 trees have been earmarked for felling and transplantation.

Data accessed by The Indian Express shows that the permissions for tree felling were cleared as a part of at least 43 different proposals, which were approved in a span of eight meetings of the Tree Authority convened between May 8 and October 5. The removal of trees was sought for infrastructure projects of government agencies, including BMC and MMRDA for projects, including Mumbai Coastal Road, Dharavi Redevelopment, Orange gate tunnel project and other private redevelopment projects. The clearance was received on the basis of proposals, tabled before the Tree Authority, where agencies concerned identified and created an inventory of trees along the alignment of their project work. Collectively, the proposals by different agencies identified 14,877 trees in the project alignment of which 3,502 were sought to be permanently cut, 4,131 were proposed for transplantation while



the remaining trees were proposed to be retained.

The proposals were cleared by the Tree Authority, which was formulated in April after remaining dissolved for nearly four years. A query to the BMC's Superintendent of Gardens and Tree officer by The Indian Express did not elicit a response.

When numbers speak

Documents show that the largest number of tree cutting and transplantation was approved to make way for the second phase of the Mumbai Coastal Road Project where the agency had submitted proposals to cut 706 trees and transplant 1,294 trees.

For instance: as a part of the package E of the coastal road project, one of the proposals sought to cut 33 trees in Kandivali, followed by 140 trees near Gorai and 80 trees in Borivali for the project's F package, 23 trees and 118 trees near Charkop for Package D, 130 trees for its Bangar Nagar to Mindspace stretch and 182 trees for the project's Package A. Permissions for all the coastal road (north) project proposals were granted in a meeting convened on May 29. Another large number of tree felling was approved for infrastructure projects such as MMRDA's elevated corridor from Chedha Nagar to Anand Nagar, Motilal Nagar redevelopment, Dharavi redevelopment project and Orange gate to Marine Drive tunnel project.

How it is approved

In Mumbai, all proposals for felling and plantation of trees for development works are cleared by the Tree Authority, which comprises a panel of 13 elected members and upto 10 nominated members. In BMC, the tree authority was constituted in 1976 as per the provisions of Maharashtra Act No. XLIV of 1975. According to the act provisions, the proceedings of the authority are chaired by the BMC commissioner who serves as the panel's chairperson. The proposals to cut, protect or transplant trees are submitted before the Tree Authority for final approvals, after passing through a long channel of bureaucratic assessment.

Mumbai CSMT ceiling collapses amid renovation work

The incident at Mumbai's CSMT occurred around 10.05 pm when a portion of the ceiling near the booking hall entrance collapsed during redevelopment and maintenance work.

Mumbai.(Agency)

Mumbai CSMT ceiling collapse: Two people were injured after a portion of the ceiling at Mumbai's iconic Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) crashed during redevelopment work on Thursday night, October 22, raising concerns over safety at the heritage railway station. The incident occurred around 10.05 pm when a portion of the ceiling near the booking hall entrance collapsed. The area was undergoing redevelopment and maintenance work by the Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA).The injured commuters were identified as Vinayak Hatkar, 28, and Ayan Matwankar, 24. Both sustained injuries and were taken to the Casualty Department of St George's Hospital for medical treatment.

While Matwankar suffered lacerations over his left eyelid and swelling in his right ankle, Hatkar sustained a wound on his scalp, which was subsequently treated. Further investigations and clinical assessments are underway.

CSMT development work

The RLDA is undertaking redevelopment and maintenance work at CSMT, including upgrades to offices within the heritage building and development around the station, including the platform deck.

The incident comes amid ongoing work in and around the heritage station and follows another incident earlier this month, when a wall of an old building earmarked for demolition collapsed outside CSMT. While no one was injured in the earlier incident, the collapse damaged a car, two motorcycles and a water container truck. Thursday's incident, in which two commuters sustained injuries, comes as redevelopment and maintenance work continues at one of Mumbai's busiest railway stations. CSMT currently sees a daily footfall of 12 lakh passengers.

Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board fixes filthy, smelly water issue in Shanthinagar

BENGALURU.(Agency)

After The New Indian Express published a report on October 6 about residents of St Michael School Road in Shanthinagar assembly constituency getting smelly, black water in their taps, Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) sprang into action and fixed the issue.

The report also drew the attention of the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), and BWSSB has now confirmed that coliform, or E.coli, is absent. The CMO had monitored and directed the Urban Development department to address the issue on a war footing.The Board, in its communication to the CMO, had stated that there are house service connections of GI pipes which pass through the rainwater drain, and during rains, the old water supply pipeline gets polluted due to wastewater entering it. "Work on the new water supply pipeline has been completed, and clean drinking water supplied through the new pipeline.

Water from the pipeline has been tested in the Board's laboratory, and a report submitted stating it is fit for drinking," it said. Residents of Shanthinagar Welfare Association stated that in May 2026, BWSSB installed a new pipeline for water connection; however, once they started receiving water from August, residents of St Michael School Road complained about dirty water flowing into their sumps from the new line, and suspected a leak.

Karnataka lawyer to face trial for practising sans licence

BENGALURU.(Agency)

Allowing the trial against an advocate for allegedly practising for more than a decade without clearing the All India Bar Examination (AIBE), the Karnataka High Court directed the Karnataka State Bar Council (KSBC) to evolve a mechanism to identify such advocates and take action against them.

"The KSBC, in respect of having enrolled the advocate and when the same is provisional enrollment in terms of the rule, make an appropriate mechanism in order to prevent the illegal practice, if they have not qualified in AIBE", the court said while directing the KSBC to maintain a record digitally for having made the date of enrollment, expiry period of two years and to track such advocates who have enrolled but not qualified to continue the practice and prepare the list of suspended roll of advocates to curb the illegal practice."It is not the only duty of the KSBC to enrol, and it is also the duty of the KSBC to maintain a roll in respect of those who are eligible and not eligible to practice," said Justice H P Sandesh, dismissing the petition filed in 2020 by M Prasanna Kumar from Bangarpet challenging the order passed by a trial court to conduct an investigation against him based on a private complaint invoking the offences under Sections 419, 420, 120B and 511 of IPC read with Section 45 of the Advocates Act.

The court said that the KSBC shall take immediate steps to initiate action against such advocates who have not qualified to continue the practice since it is an offence against the society at large.

The KSBC has to maintain an integrated enrollment record and make verification of examination results by an appropriate mechanism for verifying the AIBE results with the aid of the Bar Council of India.

Bengaluru: Pink Line operational nod likely in 4-5 days

BENGALURU.(Agency)

Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda on Thursday informed that the operational approval for the 7.5-km elevated Pink Line section between Kalena Agrahara and Tavarekere is expected within four to five days. He also directed officials to expedite works to ensure that the Blue Line connecting airport is operational by mid-2027.

Gowda said the approval to commence operations of Pink Line is expected within the next four to five days. The state government has written to the Union government and the ministers concerned, requesting that an inauguration date be finalised at the earliest, he added.



Despite a letter from the Chief Minister, no formal or informal response has been received from the Centre regarding the opening date, he said, adding that he would seek a meeting with the Union Minister concerned to press for an early decision. After inspecting the works and reviewing progress with officials of the Blue Line, the minister directed officials and contractors to expedite works, stressing that the project had already been delayed by at least a year.

He attributed delays to legal hurdles over tree-felling permissions near KR Pura, which held up Phase 2A (KR Pura-Central Silk Board) works for about a year despite approval from the tree committee. Cauvery water supply pipelines and underground drainage lines, particularly between Veerannapalya and Hebbal, also delayed construction by six to eight months as they had to be shifted or replaced. Heavy traffic on the Outer Ring Road has restricted work to night hours, from 7 pm until early morning. Gowda said contractors had not responded at the expected pace and that the state government was pressing them to accelerate construction. For the KR Pura-Central Silk Board section, officials have been directed to begin trial runs by the end of October and operate trains progressively between KR Pura and Marathahalli from the first week of November. Commercial services on the section are targeted for the middle of next year.

Sandeep, Haney's world record golds take India's medal tally past 100 in Asian Para Games

CHENNAI .(Agency)

India crossed the 100-medal mark at the Asian Para Games 2026 after Sandeep Singh Maan and Haney produced world-record performances to win gold medals in athletics in Nagoya on Friday, October 23.

Sandeep, competing in the men's 400m event, delivered a sensational performance at the Nagoya City Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium to win gold and set a world record.

Moments later, Indian javelin thrower Haney added another world record to the tally, winning the men's F37/38 event with a throw of 60.49m.Sandeep, competing in a combined men's 400m event featuring athletes from the T44, T42 and T64 classifications, led the race from the start and held his advantage despite a late surge from Saudi Arabia's Alsana Noor. He clocked 52.28 seconds to claim gold, bettering his personal best by more than a second and helping India cross



the 100-medal milestone.The victory also gave India its 25th gold medal at the competition, taking the country to within two of its best-ever gold medal haul of 27, achieved at the previoSandeep was not the only Indian medallist in the event. Ajay Kumar, running in Lane 5, won bronze with a time of 53.61 seconds, adding another medal to India's tally.

India's WTC Final chances: What South Africa's win over Australia means



New Delhi.(Agency)

South Africa's innings-and-31-run victory over Australia in the second Test in Gqeberha has made the race for the World Test Championship (WTC) final more competitive.Although Australia remain at the top of the standings, the defeat stops them from extending their lead and gives other teams, including India, some hope.Australia have a points percentage (PCT) of 75.00, while New Zealand are second at 72.22 and South Africa sit third at 66.67..

What India need to do

India are currently fifth in the standings, with seven Tests remaining in the cycle — two against New Zealand and five against Australia at home. To finish with a PCT of 60, India need to collect 62 points from these matches and cannot afford to lose more than two Tests.

However, even a strong finish may not guarantee qualification. India also need at least two of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa to drop points in their remaining matches. Their upcoming series against New Zealand and Australia will therefore be crucial to their chances of reaching the final at The Oval in London next year.

Bangladesh also in the race

Bangladesh, currently fourth, remain in contention for a place in the final. Four of their six remaining Tests will be played at home, giving them an opportunity to collect valuable points.They will need to make the most of home conditions and hope that teams above them lose points. South Africa's win has kept the competition open, but India still face a difficult task and will need both consistent performances and favourable results elsewhere to reach the final.

Anahat Singh scripts comeback to reach maiden PSA Gold semi-final

Anahat Singh fought back from a 2-1 deficit to beat Egypt's Salma Hany and reach her maiden PSA Gold semi-final at the Silicon Valley Open. The 18-year-old's breakthrough comes a day after she stunned eight-time world champion Nour El Sherbini, putting her one win away from a place in the final.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Anahat Singh came from behind to beat Egypt's Salma Hany and book her place in the semi-finals of the Silicon Valley Open, reaching the last four of a PSA Gold event for the first time. The 18-year-old recovered from a 2-1 deficit to win 4-11, 11-8, 4-11, 11-2, 11-5 in a 42-minute contest.The World No. 15 had a tough start against Hany, ranked 14th in the world, and found herself trailing twice in the match. But Anahat turned things around in the fourth game, dropping just two points before closing out the decider with another convincing performance. After the match, she admitted that she had not started well but was determined to make Hany work for the win."I did not start off well. The first game was 11-4, which was a pretty bad start. However, I wanted to find a way to make my way back into the match and put up a fight. Whether it resulted in a win or a loss, I did not want to let it go too easily," Anahat said."I gave it my all in the second game and tried to make it one-all. We kept winning games alternately, so it was quite a roller coaster. I am happy I got through it," she added.

A NEW MILESTONE FOR INDIAN SQUASH

The win takes Anahat into her first PSA Gold semi-final, another important step in her



progress on the senior circuit. She had come close at the London Squash Classic, where she reached the quarter-finals. That made her the first Indian woman since Joshna Chinappa in 2021 to reach the last eight of a Gold-level event. This time, Anahat has gone one better.Her run in Silicon Valley has also shown she can handle different kinds of challenges. Against Hany, she had to fight her way back into the match after losing two of the first three games. The way she took control in the final two games was in sharp contrast to her uncertain start.

ANAHAT'S BIG BREAKTHROUGH CONTINUES

Anahat had already made headlines in the previous round by beating Egypt's eight-time world champion Nour El Sherbini. She won 11-8, 11-8, 11-7 in just 30 minutes, pulling off one of the biggest wins of her senior career. Following that up with a five-game comeback against Hany has made her run in California even more impressive.

She now faces Malaysia's World No. 4 Sivasangari Subramaniam for a place in the final. The two met in the Asian Games 2026 women's singles final, where Sivasangari won gold and Anahat settled for silver. The Indian will have another chance to test herself against the Malaysian, with a place in the Silicon Valley Open final at stake.

Bruno Fernandes' home burgled hours after Manchester United's Como defeat

New Delhi.(Agency)

Manchester United captain Bruno Fernandes had his home in Cheshire burgled on Wednesday evening while he was in Italy for his side's Champions League clash against Como. Police have launched an investigation after several items were stolen from the property, with three unidentified men reportedly spotted in the area shortly before officers arrived.The incident took place at around 8.30pm local time, shortly after United's 4-1 defeat to Como, which added to an already difficult evening for the Portuguese midfielder. Fortunately, neither Fernandes nor his family was at home when the break-in occurred, according to reports.Cheshire Police confirmed that officers had been called to a residential address following reports of suspicious activity involving three unknown men. The suspects had left before the police arrived, but officers discovered evidence of a burglary and confirmed that a number of items had been stolen.Detective Inspector Dave Jarvis said the investigation was in its early stages, with enquiries continuing to identify those responsible. Manchester United are also supporting Fernandes and his family following the incident, while the club has requested that their privacy be respected.

POLICE INVESTIGATE CHESHIRE BURGLARY

According to reports, police were alerted at approximately 8.30pm BST after a caller reported seeing three unidentified men in the rear garden of a neighbouring property. Officers reached the scene but found no trace of the suspects.Their subsequent checks revealed that Fernandes' home had been broken into and several items taken. The investigation remains



ongoing, and no arrests have been confirmed in the reports available so far.United have confirmed that Fernandes' family were not at the property when the incident occurred. According to reports citing the club, the intruders spent less than five minutes inside the house before police arrived. The club is providing support to the midfielder and his family as the investigation continues.

BURGLARY FOLLOWS BRUNO vs CARRICK ROW

The burglary came on a difficult evening for Fernandes, whose Manchester United side suffered a 4-1 Champions League defeat to Como.

Injured Ishan Kishan out of 2nd T20I, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi will replace batter: Sitanshu Kotak

Nagoya.(Agency)

Just two days after India captain Shreyas Iyer said Vaibhav Sooryavanshi would have to bide his time to break into the Indian T20I team, the teenager could get a chance in the second T20I against New Zealand. Vaibhav, who has been sitting out of the playing XI due to a packed top order, is likely to replace Ishan Kishan in the line-up for the second match of the series.India batting coach Sitanshu Kotak informed the press on Thursday, after the conclusion of the opening T20I in Christchurch, that Kishan had suffered a groin injury and was unlikely to take part in the next match at Hagley Oval.Kishan, the team's No. 3 batter in T20Is, was pushed down the order on Thursday, sparking speculation among fans. Initially, it appeared to be another experiment by the Indian team, with Tilak Varma returning to his original position at No. 3. Kishan eventually came out to bat at No. 5 after Varma's dismissal but lasted just three balls. He attempted to hit a six off his third delivery but ended up skying the ball straight into the hands of Finn Allen.The India batting coach later revealed that Kishan had been pushed down the order because of a groin niggle."Ishan Kishan has a groin niggle, that's why Tilak Varma was promoted. Ishan is also unlikely to play in the second T20I. If Ishan doesn't play, unless he recovers completely, which the medical team will advise, Vaibhav could definitely step in for him. He is one of the strongest contenders," Sitanshu Kotak told the press.



VAIBHAV SOORYAVANSHI GETS LUCKY BREAK

The development could hand Vaibhav Sooryavanshi a breakthrough opportunity after he was left out of the playing XI for the opening match. The teenager has not played a T20I since the Asian Games final in Nagoya. Vaibhav was asked to remain patient by captain Shreyas Iyer and head coach Gautam Gambhir as questions around his exclusion grew louder in the media and cricketing circles.He is very young; he has more years to get opportunities. It's not like he can walk in right now, because our openers are scoring consistently, and they have won the World Cup," Iyer had told reporters before the first T20I.

Ishan Kishan ruled out of 2nd T20I against New Zealand

Ishan Kishan is ruled out of the second T20I against New Zealand due to a low grade right adductor strain, which he sustained during the first T20I of the series, a BCCI statement added.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Indian wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan has been ruled out of Saturday's second T20 International against New Zealand here due to a right adductor strain that he sustained during the series-opener.India won the opening match by four wickets here on Thursday (October 22, 2026).



"Ishan Kishan is ruled out of the second T20I against New Zealand due to a low grade right adductor strain, which he sustained during the first T20I of the series," the BCCI statement read.

"The BCCI Medical Team is monitoring his progress," it added.

Right adductor is a group of muscles located on the inner side of the thigh.

The BCCI did not specify how long it would take for Kishan to recover.

Harry Brook's double century goes in vain as Sri Lanka pull off 2nd highest ODI chase to stun England

New Delhi.(Agency)

Harry Brook's record double century went in vain as Sri Lanka pulled off the second-highest run chase in ODI history to stun England in the clash between the two sides in the ongoing tri-series in Pakistan. Sri Lanka rode on a brilliant century from Pavan Rathnayake and half-centuries from Avishka Fernando, Dasun Shanaka and Janith Liyanage to secure one of the greatest wins in ODIs.It all came down to the final over, with Sri Lanka needing 6 to win off the last two balls of the game. Liyanage hit a six off the bowling of Josh Tongue to get Sri Lanka over the line in spectacular fashion and seal a historic victory for his team.Tongue had sparked hope for England when he removed Dunith Wellalage and Eshan Malinga on back-to-back deliveries in the final over of Sri Lanka's innings. However, Liyanage smashed a six of the penultimate ball and remained unbeaten on 61 off 27 to take his team home.



In pursuit of the mammoth 430-run target, Sri Lanka got off to a poor start as they lost opener Kamindu Mendis and skipper Kusal Mendis cheaply to get reduced to 24/2. Fernando then joined hands with centurion Rathnayake to get the chase back on track. Rathnayake slammed 130 off 106 balls, while Fernando scored 97 off 83 balls to add 166 runs for the third wicket.Shanaka then produced a brilliant knock of 97 runs and combined with Rathnayake to add 133 runs for the fourth wicket, taking Sri Lanka closer to victory. Liyanage slammed an unbeaten 61 off just 27 deliveries to help Sri Lanka take down the huge target with a ball to spare.

Mona Agarwal doubles gold tally with world-record show at Asian Para Games

Nagoya.(Agency)

Mona Agarwal struck gold for the second time at the Asian Para Games in Aichi-Nagoya on Friday, setting a world record in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions SH1 final with a score of 357.5.The Indian para-shooter bettered the previous world record of 356, held by Sweden's Anna Benson, who set the mark in Novi Sad on July 26, 2026. injury. Nishad's knee had been troubling him for a yChina's Cuiping Zhang finished second with 353.7, while South Korea's Myoung Kim took bronze with 344.4. India's Avani Lekhara finished fourth with 333.2.For Mona, the latest gold adds another milestone to a sporting journey that has taken several turns. The 38-year-old from Sikar, Rajasthan,



won bronze in the women's 10m air rifle standing SH1 event at the Paris 2024 Paralympics. Now, she's back on top in Nagoya, with a second gold and a world record to her name.

A DIFFERENT SPORTING PATH

Mona contracted polio at nine months old, which affected both her lower limbs. Sport, however, became a constant in her life. Before picking up a rifle, she competed in para-athletics and para-powerlifting and played a key role in women's sitting volleyball.

In 2019, she captained Rajasthan's women's team to gold at the inaugural National Sitting Volleyball Championship. Two years later, in December 2021, she began competitive rifle shooting. Success came quickly.



Priyanka Chopra

Exits Saif Ali Khan And Ritesh Batra's Film? Here's What We Know

Priyanka Chopra was expected to headline Saif Ali Khan and Ritesh Batra's upcoming period drama, but looks like things haven't worked out as planned. The actress has reportedly exited the yet-untitled film due to a scheduling conflict, just as the project begins shooting in Mumbai.

Why Did Priyanka Chopra Step Away From The Project?

According to a report by Mid Day, Priyanka Chopra was keen to be part of the film and work with both Saif and Ritesh. However, her existing commitments made it difficult to accommodate the shoot dates. The team reportedly tried to work around her schedule, but the plans didn't come together."Priyanka was expected to join the Mumbai shoot. However, she had to bow out of the film. She was keen to headline it, and work with both Saif and Ritesh. Her existing professional commitments, however, led to a scheduling conflict. The team explored the possibility of working the dates around, but it just didn't work out," a source told the publication.The film went on floors on October 21 at a museum in Byculla, Mumbai. With the shoot already underway, the makers are now looking for someone to step into the female lead's role.



Who Will Play The Female Lead After Priyanka Chopra's Exit?

The casting search is reportedly down to two leading actors, with the team expected to make a decision soon, reports Mid Day. For now, the shoot is moving ahead with Saif filming his portions over the first few days.The film is also expected to be shot on a start-to-finish schedule across different parts of South Mumbai.

Priyanka Chopra And Saif Ali Khan Have Never Shared Screen Space

Interestingly, Priyanka and Saif have never worked together on screen. The period drama could have marked their first collaboration, however, looks like that won't be happening after all.Ritesh Batra, meanwhile, is known for directing films such as The Lunchbox (2013), The Sense of an Ending (2017), Our Souls at Night (2017) and Photograph (2019).

With filming already underway, it remains to be seen who will eventually take on the female lead and join Saif in the period drama.Saif was last seen in Priyadarshan's thriller film 'Haiwaan' which also starred Akshay Kumar.Meanwhile, Priyanka Chopra will next be seen in SS Rajamouli's highly anticipated film 'Varanasi' starring Mahesh Babu and Prithviraj Sukumaran. The film will release on April 7, 2027.

Radhikka Madan

Completes 8 Years In Bollywood: 'So Much Left To Dream'



Actress Radhikka Madan has completed eight years in the entertainment industry and looked back on her journey. She reflected on the experiences, challenges, and lessons that have shaped her over the years. Sharing a note on Instagram, the 'Angrezi Medium' actress expressed gratitude to those who supported her, particularly during moments when she found it difficult to believe in herself.



"8 years. So many stories told, so many versions of myself discovered. Some dreams came true, some changed along the way," she wrote. Reflecting on the highs and lows of her career, Radhikka said her love for her work had remained unchanged despite the challenges and experiences along the way.She also thanked those who continued to believe in her, acknowledging the role they played in her journey. "To everyone who believed in me, especially on days when I struggled to believe in myself, thank you. You've been a bigger part of this journey than you know," she added.Looking ahead, the actress said she continued to feel the same excitement and enthusiasm for her work, with many more dreams to pursue. "8 years later, still the same butterflies, still the same hunger, and so much left to dream," she wrote.Radhikka began her career on television with the popular show 'Meri Aashiqui Tum Se Hi,' in which she played Ishaani. She later made her film debut with Vishal Bhardwaj's 'Pataakha' in 2018. Over the years, she has appeared in films such as 'Mard Ko Dard Nahi Hota,' 'Angrezi Medium,' 'Shiddat,' and 'Sajini Shinde Ka Viral Video.' She was also seen in the streaming series 'Saas, Bahu Aur Flamingo.'

Radhikka Madan was last seen in the Netflix anthology film 'Lust Stories 3', which premiered on September 18. She also featured in the action film 'Subedaar,' which was released on Prime Video.

'Daler Paaji Sharaab Nahi Peete': Rajpal Yadav Backs Daler Mehndi, Slams Uttarakhand Minister



Actor Rajpal Yadav has come out in support of Daler Mehndi amid the criticism the singer has been facing after he was accused of performing in an intoxicated state during a cultural event in Tehri Garhwal. Recently, Yadav took to his Instagram handle and slammed Uttarakhand Cabinet Minister Subodh Uniyal, who confronted Mehndi on stage. He clarified that Daler Mehndi does not drink alcohol and urged the minister to be a little respectful towards others."As a student of art, I want to share something with you. The way a respected minister said hurtful things and used indecent language against a legendary singer whose voice has touched people for decades, does not suit someone holding such a position," Rajpal Yadav said in Hindi."It seemed like you bought the art itself, which simply cannot be bought. Art is life, and you should respect life. And for your information, I will tell you that Daler Paaji does not drink alcohol. I have worked with him in Welcome To The Jungle. He is suffering from ill health, and people are trying to help him recover. The throne may come and go, but art will always hold a higher place, so you should respect it. God bless you," the actor added.

WHAT IS THE CONTROVERSY? WHAT DID THE UTTARAKHAND MINISTER SAY?

Daler Mehndi recently landed in a controversy after Uttarakhand Cabinet Minister Subodh Uniyal confronted him on stage during a performance at the Siddhpeeth Maa Kunjapuri Tourism and Development Fair in Tehri Garhwal. The incident took place on Sunday, October 18, and a video of the exchange went viral on social media.The minister accused the singer of being intoxicated and failing to perform properly at the Navratri event. Questioning his performance, Uniyal said, "You are unable to even speak, how will you sing?" He also alleged that Mehndi had been paid Rs 35 lakh for the show and accused him of disappointing the audience.

'I Am Muslim But I Don't Read Namaz': Shabana Azmi Says Religion Is A Private Matter



Veteran actress Shabana Azmi has opened up about her relationship with religion, revealing that while she identifies herself as a Muslim and enjoys the cultural aspects of the faith, she does not actively practise it. In a recent interview shared on the IIMUN YouTube channel, Azmi spoke about her upbringing, her 'atheist' husband Javed Akhtar and why she believes religion should remain a personal choice.Recalling her childhood, Shabana said her father, renowned poet Kaifi Azmi, was an atheist, while her mother, actor Shaukat Azmi, practised Islam to some extent. "My father was an atheist. And my mother used to practice it somewhat but not seriously," she said as quoted by .Shabana also spoke about Javed's views on religious expressions such as 'mashallah' and 'inshallah', which she uses in everyday conversation. She explained that these words are simply part of her language, even though her husband questions their use.

Describing Javed as an 'atheist', the actress stated, "He is a very staunch atheist." She added that she has often questioned why he needs to express his atheism so strongly when others find comfort in religious practices.

Talking about her own identity, Shabana said, "Yes, I am a Muslim, and I like Eid, Urdu, the food, I like all of that. But we don't read namaz, and we have no association with religion as such."

The actor further emphasised that faith should be a private matter and that the state should not interfere in an individual's religious beliefs. "The concept of God… It isn't anything that I have had to deal with, except that I feel that it's really a private matter. The state shouldn't get involved," she said, adding that she has no objection to people who find peace through prayer.

UN climate disaster fund moves to provide $20 million aid for Nepal

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

The United Nations' climate loss and damage fund moved Thursday to provide $20 million in aid sought by flood-stricken Nepal, the first time it has set aside money for any country, in a key test of the body's credibility.In an extraordinary meeting, the fund's board agreed to earmark the modest sum for the Himalayan country, which was hit in August by tsunami-like floods triggered by a climate-induced ice and rock avalanche that killed more than 1,400 people and left over 5,000 missing.Camila Minerva Rodriguez Tavarez, the Dominican co-chair of the board, called the outcome "truly historic" and thanked members for "allowing us to act promptly and have a response to Nepal."

Reacting to the news, Nepal's finance minister Swarnim Wagle told AFP: "The fact that they could convene this emergency meeting in response to our letter and commit $20 million of grant money is very welcome."

The decision does not, however, mean that Nepal will immediately receive the funding, which amounts to less than 0.5 percent of the government's $4.78 billion estimate for reconstruction.

Twenty million dollars is the maximum amount countries can request in a single application.

Judge orders Trump to sit for a deposition in his defamation lawsuit against the BBC by Dec 11

MIAMI.(Agency)

A federal judge on Thursday ordered President Donald Trump to sit for a deposition in his $10 billion defamation lawsuit against the BBC by Dec. 11.

The order from U.S. Magistrate Judge Enjoliqué Lett came as lawyers for the British broadcaster complained that Trump had delayed his appearance. Charles Tobin, attorney for the BBC, said that with two months left in the discovery period, "we still haven't been able to depose the plaintiff."He noted there was an agreed-upon date of Oct. 16, but that Trump had canceled it for a "matter of national importance."

Tobin said the Republican president was in fact campaigning in Georgia that day. "He was participating in party politics and prioritized that over sitting for the deposition," Tobin said.Lett said Trump must sit for a deposition by Dec. 11, or face sanctions up to dismissal of his lawsuit -– unless the discovery period was extended past Dec. 18.

China's first AI film hits cinemas, but ticket sales lag

world.(Agency)

China's first fully AI-generated feature film opens in cinemas on Friday in what promises to be a tough box-office test for the country's booming tech industry as advance ticket sales lag.

More than 10,000 screenings of the sci-fi thriller "Sanxingdui: Future Past" are scheduled for Friday, according to ticketing platform Maoyan.Public reception, however, has been less than enthusiastic.

Presale revenue as of Friday morning stood at 80,000 yuan ($11,980), while total box-office takings were forecast to remain below 150,000 yuan, only a fraction of the reported production cost, according to Maoyan.Ticket prices range from 20 to 90 yuan, bringing the number sold to a few thousand at most.Jiang Defu, CEO of the production company Bona Film Group, acknowledged the lukewarm reception in a recent interview but said the film was pushing boundaries.

Thousands gather in Paris after a court lifts a protest ban despite fears of new violence

PARIS.(Agency)

Thousands of protesters took to the Paris streets on Thursday while other cities banned demonstrations following a weekend of clashes and widespread looting that marked France's most violent unrest in years.Organizers of the Paris protest said an administrative court overturned a ban issued by police after they challenged it. The Paris prefecture previously said the ban was necessary, given the risk of street violence after groups of masked youth clashed with officers, looted shops and torched cars over the weekend.The Paris court ruling was not immediately made public. Protesters, including many youngsters, gathered peacefully and chanted in a southeastern part of the city amid heavy police presence."We don't need tear gas for our future to look bleak," read a banner they unfurled.

Organizers signed a police document stating that the protest would remain stationary due to the risk of violence.More bans were expected in the coming days. French President Emmanuel Macron said such measures aim to protect city centers, businesses and public buildings.The right to demonstrate is protected by the French Constitution, and bans on demonstrations planned for Thursday in Paris, Lyon, Lille and Grenoble were seen by some as an infringement on French people's right to protest.High school and university student groups said they will continue to mobilize, even though the autumn school break started this week.Macron said after a special security meeting at the Elysée Palace that the strategy adopted for the coming days is to ban protests requested by "individuals or groups with no legitimate authority.""The rules are simple, and I think they're just common sense. The general recommendation is that there should be no demonstrations in the coming days," he said. "For those who still want to protest, if they are trade unions, prefects will propose alternative routes."Macron blamed the weekend's violence on "actions led by radical far-left groups who aimed to bring the Republic down," in addition to criminals who came to loot.The turmoil in Paris and other French cities has prompted a strong security



response. Night curfews have been implemented in some areas of the French capital, as well as in other cities where calm has been restored.Authorities are bracing for another big protest dayThursday's planned protests were seen as a prelude to Saturday's big demonstration, when activists from the CGT labor union and the " yellow vest " movement, whose demonstrations over fuel prices shook France in 2018 and 2019, are expected to join.Some of those protests, including marches in Lyon, Marseille and Montpellier, will also be banned, local authorities said. Cities outside Paris have been hit hard by the unrest, including Limoges where a fire nearly destroyed the 19th century city hall.Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu, who met union representatives on Wednesday, said a "massive" security operation was planned for Saturday to prevent a repeat of the violence by small groups of rioters that had exposed shortcomings in security measures.

Union representatives said their meeting with Lecornu did not result in concrete proposals. They are now focusing on another big day of action scheduled on Nov. 5, and called on private and public sector employees to join.

From student protests to a broader social movementThe demonstrations first erupted last month in a high school in Creteil, southeast of Paris, over a lack of staff.

Powerful earthquake in Tibet collapses hundreds of homes and kills at least 16 people

BEIJING.(Agency)

A magnitude 7 earthquake hit China's Tibet region on Thursday evening, killing at least 16 people, injuring 54 and collapsing hundreds of homes in the northern regional city of Nagqu, official media said.Search and rescue efforts continued following the collapse of at least 339 homes and 20 livestock sheds, the Nagqu media office said, citing city government officials.More than 1,600 people from the local county were deployed for rescue efforts. Supplies including 1,000 prefabricated housing units, around 3,000 tents and folding beds, as well as flashlights and winter clothing arrived in the region.The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake occurred at 10:33 p.m. local time, with its epicenter 191 kilometers (119 miles) east-northeast of Nagqu, in a sparsely populated, high-altitude area of northern Tibet. It put the earthquake's depth at 18 kilometers (11 miles).



The U.S. agency recorded at least seven aftershocks with magnitude between 4.3 and 5.2, all of them with a depth of 10 kilometers (6 miles) , according to its websiteChina's official news agency Xinhua said on Friday that communication in part of the region has been down. Local railway authorities have taken emergency actions to halt trains passing through the region.

The earthquake also caused rockfalls that have forced local authorities to close a section of National Highway 317, allowing only emergency, rescue and official support vehicles through as crews worked to clear debris, according to Xinhua.Intermittent snows are expected in the earthquake region over the next three days, Xinhua said.

It was the biggest earthquake in the region in the last five years, China's national broadcaster CCTV said.

Chinese President Xi Jinping called for all-out efforts in rescue operations and medical relief work.

A Ukrainian soldier lost his sight in war. Now he hopes to see his children again

KYIV, Ukraine.(Agency)

Mykola Kasiuk's world plunged into near-total darkness when a land mine exploded on the battlefield with Russian troops.The Ukrainian soldier lost an eye. He clings to hope that one day he will see with the other because he can still discern faint traces of light.After two years and numerous operations, Kasiuk placed that hope with a visiting team of U.S. surgeons.Kasiuk crossed himself as he lay on a hospital bed before a recent surgery in Kyiv, praying for one thing:"I want to be able to see my children again."Surgeons treat wounded soldiers while teaching Ukrainian



doctorsRussia's war in Ukraine has left soldiers and civilians with devastating eye and facial injuries. But specialists who can repair the damage are scarce.

Before the 2022 invasion, ophthalmic expertise in many Ukrainian hospitals rarely extended beyond basic procedures such as cataract surgeryThe U.S. surgeons treat complex cases while training Ukrainian doctors in oculoplastic surgery, from rebuilding damaged eye sockets to fitting artificial eyes.Local doctors had told Kasiuk that his vision was lost and recommended removing his remaining eye.

Trying to establish 'facts' about incident 'apparently' involving Indians on yacht off Yemen coast: India

DUBAI.(Agency)

The Indian Embassy in Yemen on Friday (October 23, 2026) said it has reached out to different parties to "establish circumstances and facts" surrounding an incident off the coast of Yemen in which "apparently there were Indian nationals on board a yacht."

Some Arab media on Thursday (October 22, 2026) quoted Yemen's Houthi spokesman Yahya Saree as claiming that Saudi forces targeted the Indian yacht near Yuqar Island near the Yemeni coast in the Red Sea.

Mr. Saree said that the yacht is carrying 14 Indian nationals and that Houthi forces are rescuing them. He said more details would be provided later.

"We are cntinuing to make efforts to find more details



about the incident off the coast of Yemen on October 22 in which apparently there were Indian nationals (sailors) on board a yacht," the Indian mission posted on social media on Friday (October 23, 2026).

The incident comes amid an escalation of hostilities between Iran-backed Houthis and Saudi Arabia, with both sides targeting each other's facilities and infrastructure."Given the prevailing conflict situation exact information is not currently available. We have reached out to different parties to establish circumstances and facts of the incident and hope to update as soon as authentic information becomes available," the mission said.The Indian Embassy on Thursday (October 22, 2026) said.

Taiwan shuts schools and grounds flights as Typhoon Champi brushes by

TAIPEI.(Agency)

TAIPEI: Taiwan shut down schools and offices and grounded hundreds of flights as Typhoon Champi brushed by the island Friday, packing strong winds and torrential rains.Champi peaked at 298 kph (185 mph) maximum sustained winds earlier this week but has weakened to 155 kph (96 mph) winds as it approached Taiwan from the southwest. Its center is forecast to remain offshore as it sweeps by the island's northeastern tip before turning north toward Japan's southwestern islands.Taiwan's Central Weather Administration urged residents in coastal areas to avoid outdoor activities and driving and be cautious of falling objects.One person was killed Thursday after being swept by waves in Liuqiu, a small island off the southeastern coast of Taiwan's main island, according to the fire department. Ninety-four others were injured in the storm.Almost 1,300 people have been evacuated from vulnerable, mountainous areas, the government said.All of Taiwan's 262 domestic flights were cancelled along with 669 international flights, according to the transport ministry. High-speed rail services on the western coast were operating normally.

In southwestern Japan, the typhoon has injured one person, grounded flights and knocked out power.On Miyako island, a woman in her 70s suffered a broken leg in the blowing wind, according to the Okinawa prefecture government.On Ishigaki island, nearly 2,000 homes were without electricity.Dozens of flights in and out of the southwestern islands, including Miyako, Ishigaki and Okinawa, have been canceled.

In the Philippines, the coast guard prohibited ships and ferries from venturing into the increasingly choppy waters off several northern towns and cities Friday.

The main domestic airport in Batanes provincial capital of Basco was shut down Friday and two local flights were canceled, Philippine aviation officials said. The airport's windows were boarded up as a safety



precaution.In Cagayan province, nearly 200 people evacuated to safer grounds as a precaution, including nearly 100 who moved to government-run emergency shelters. Classes were suspended in all levels in the island town of Calayan off Cagayan due to the typhoon, provincial officials said.

Champi earlier this month blew past several Pacific islands, including Guam, where a federal disaster area was declared.

Mississippi releases video showing fatal shooting of 1-year-old boy by police officer

Washington.(Agency)

Mississippi authorities released video Thursday showing the fatal shooting of a 1-year-old boy by a police officer who opened fire while dodging the car driven by a family friend. A state investigation found no criminal wrongdoing by the officer, but the family's attorney says it was wanton use of force.

Kohen Wiley was killed in June when Senatobia police officer Sgt. Hunter Foster fired his gun into a moving vehicle while responding to a shoplifting call. Kohen's family says footage of the fatal encounter shows the shooting was not justified.The Mississippi Attorney General's office said this week its monthslong probe found that Foster's use of force was appropriate. Foster's attorney, Martin Zummach, has said his client had "no choice" but to shoot at the vehicle because it was going to hit him.

Ben Crump, a civil rights attorney representing Kohen's family, said Foster was not in danger when he fired the shot that killed the 1-year-old. Crump said the video shows Foster fired that shot from the passenger side of the car.Kohen's close relatives watched the footage shot during the June 14 encounter in a Walmart parking lot in Senatobia, about 40 miles (65 kilometers) south of Memphis, Tennessee. The video included footage from the camera worn by the officer who shot and killed Kohen.Kohen would have celebrated his second birthday in early November, civil rights attorney Ben Crump, who is representing Kohen's family, said during a news conference Thursday."The word 'justified' has haunted me," Kohen's maternal



grandmother, Veronica Roberson, said during the news conference. "There's no justification for that."Roberson said she found out from reading the newsthat the state had cleared the officer, and she also saw parts of the video that had been leaked online Wednesday. She called the lack of notice from the attorney general's office and the leak of the footage a "slap in the face" to her family.

Video shows multiple angles of the fatal encounter

The Mississippi Department of Public Safety on Thursday released footage showing the shooting from the body-worn cameras of multiple law enforcement officers, including Foster. Darkhorse Press, a Mississippi crime and community news outlet with a focus on law enforcement, posted some of that footage on its website a day earlier. The organization's founder.