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Good news on dues, says CM Shivakumar after GST meet

New Delhi. (Agency)
Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said on Thursday that Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has given him some "good news" on the state's long-pending dues. He. however, declined to share details of the "good news".Addressing the media after the GST Council meeting in New Delhi on Thursday, the CM said that he had raised Karnataka's pending arrears with the Finance Minister.Pressed for specifics, Shivakumar said, "I will not say anything more about it now. I will speak later." He described the meeting as having gone "very well" and said members had accepted the points raised by Karnataka.The Council also discussed whether criminal cases should be registered and arrests made against those who fail to pay GST. Shivakumar argued that the process should follow the rules and provisions applicable under the income tax law, and that officials should not arrest traders unnecessarily. Instead, he said, the amount due should be recovered



from them. The discussion concluded that arrests were not appropriate, he said, with all states except one agreeing.Shivakumar's attendance also draws attention to an unusual feature of Karnataka's governance. A highly placed source pointed out that Chief Ministers of large northern states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh do not usually hold the finance portfolio. In Karnataka, by contrast, CMs have often kept it themselves, a practice said to have been started by Ramakrishna Hegde, who preferred to hold Finance during his tenure. In the north, the source said, CMs tend to keep the Home portfolio, seen as the visible sign of power. Instead, he said, the amount due should be recovered from them. The discussion concluded that arrests were not appropriate, he said, with all states except one agreeing.Shivakumar's attendance also draws attention to an unusual feature of Karnataka's governance. A highly placed source pointed out that Chief Ministers of large northern states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh do not usually hold the finance portfolio.

India reacts to US move on IT firms, says J D Vance's remark 'deeply offensive'

New Delhi(Agency)
A day after the US suspended eight IT firms, including Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and Wipro, from a programme to apply for green cards for foreign workers, India said on Friday that the steps "do not advance the shared ambitions" of both countries.
The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) also referred to US Vice-President J D Vance terming foreign workers hired on H1-B visas "foreign indentured servants", saying that resorting to terminology that carries painful historical and colonial legacy connotations is "deeply offensive".
The Indian response came a day after the US administration suspended some of the largest IT outsourcing firms in the world from the Permanent Labour Certification Programme, also referred to as PERM (Program Electronic Review Management). PERM is a key provision used by American employers to sponsor foreign workers for permanent residency, with several Indian IT companies also relying on the system."It should also be clear that talent mobility adds value to both economies. While it creates opportunities for Indians, it equally helps US companies with cutting-edge talent, innovation, research, productivity, competitiveness and job creation, besides creating shareholder wealth in the US. This is therefore an area of tremendous mutual benefit for the two countries and our expectation is that all stakeholders in this process can appreciate this fact. The steps announced by the US do not advance the shared ambitions.



India said the US move to suspend eight Indian IT firms from a programme to apply for green cards for foreign workers did not 'advance the shared ambitions' of both countries.

Victory smiles on those who adapt: IAF chief on evolving technology, modern warfare

IAF Chief stressed the need to anticipate shifts in warfare and adapt to emerging technologies, saying global conflicts and Operation Sindoor had reinforced the importance of air power in safeguarding national interests.

New Delhi (Agency)
Victory belongs to those who anticipate changes in the nature of warfare and adapt accordingly, Indian Air Force (IAF) Chief Air Chief Marshal AP Singh said on Friday, stressing the growing importance of air power in modern conflicts.
Addressing a seminar on the "Central Role of Air Power in the Evolving Battlespace", Singh said the two major ongoing conflicts around the world, along with India's experience during Operation Sindoor last year, had reinforced the primacy of air power.
The seminar, hosted by a defence think-tank at the Air Force Auditorium in Subroto Park, Delhi, was held alongside the multilateral air exercise Tarang Shakti, currently underway at Jodhpur Air Force Station in Rajasthan.
Seven foreign countries,



including the US, France, Germany and Australia, are participating in the second edition of the exercise hosted by the IAF, with their air assets. The US F-35 multi-role stealth fighter jet is taking part in the exercise for the first time.
At the seminar, the IAF chief emphasised the need to anticipate changes in warfare rather than respond after they have occurred."If one doesn't anticipate changes and waits for them to happen and then adapt, then maybe it will be a bit late," he said, highlighting the rapidly evolving nature of technology and warfare.On Thursday, Singh led celebrations marking the IAF's 94th anniversary at a grand ceremony at Hindan Air Base in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh.Earlier, addressing the Air Force Day event, he said conflicts in different parts of the world had demonstrated that air power was the primary means of protecting national interests.

City Kotda Police Under Scanner: What Are PCB and SMC Doing Amid Allegations of Illegal Liquor Trade?

Mahanagar Metro Desk
Gujarat : Amid Gujarat's claims of enforcing prohibition, a shocking allegation has emerged from Ahmedabad that has raised serious questions about police accountability and the enforcement of liquor laws. A video allegedly involving Bharat Prajapati, the administrative officer at Ahmedabad's sensitive City Kotda Police Station, has reportedly gone viral, triggering concerns within the police department.According to the allegations, Bharat Prajapati was present at a country-made and foreign liquor outlet in the Memco area and was allegedly involved in operating the liquor business. The purported footage, reportedly captured during a journalistic sting operation, has raised serious questions about the alleged involvement of police personnel in activities they are expected to prevent. The authenticity of the video and the allegations require independent verification and an official investigation.Allegations of Police Protection for Illegal Liquor OperationsThe incident has brought renewed attention to the implementation of prohibition laws in Gujarat. Allegations that a police station administrator may have been operating or facilitating an illegal liquor outlet within the jurisdiction of City Kotda Police Station have raised concerns about possible misconduct and failures in enforcement.If substantiated, such allegations would represent a serious breach of public trust and could indicate potential weaknesses in the monitoring of illegal liquor trade. The reported sting operation has intensified demands for transparency regarding the functioning of the police administration and the alleged role of personnel in unlawful activities.



Bhagwant Mann Aide Goes To Court, Says Raid Illegal, Agency Had No Approval

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's OSD Rajbir Singh Ghuman has moved the Punjab and Haryana High Court challenging the CBI investigation and search conducted at his residence in Sangrur.

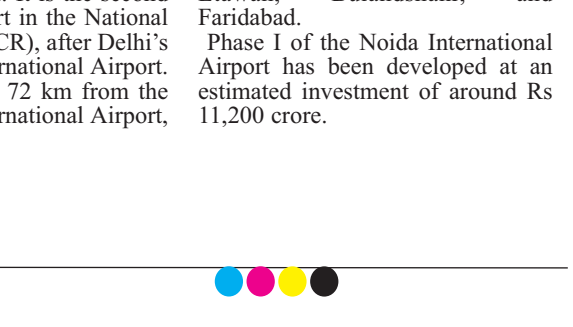
Chandigarh (Agency)
Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's OSD Rajbir Singh Ghuman has moved the Punjab and Haryana High Court challenging the CBI investigation and search conducted at his residence in Sangrur. The agency, he contended, acted without obtaining the mandatory prior approval under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act.
In his petition filed on Thursday, Ghuman has alleged that the CBI registered a First Information Report around 11.50 pm on October 5 and conducted a search at his family residence in village Gharachon, Sangrur, within 24 hours, without securing the statutory approval

required under Section 17A.
Ghuman has claimed that the search was carried out from around 5.50 pm on October 6 to 4 am on October 7, when neither he nor his family members were present at the residence. He has also questioned the manner of the search and seizure proceedings, alleging that only one independent witness was present.
The petition argues that Section 17A bars a police officer from conducting any inquiry or investigation into allegations under the Prevention of Corruption Act against a public servant, where the allegations relate to a recommendation made or decision taken in the discharge of official duties, without prior government approval. The exception is an on-the-spot arrest in a trap case, which, according to Ghuman, does not apply here.

L-G transfers 22 IAS officers in major bureaucratic rejig, DTC gets new MD

The reshuffle affects health, transport, education, food safety and civic administration, with changes including Niharika Rai getting additional charge of DTC chairman and managing director and Rupesh Kumar Thakur being moved to DUSIB.

New Delhi (Agency)
Lieutenant-Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu has made sweeping reshuffle of 34 IAS and DANICS officers in health, education, transport, food safety, waste management and civic administration departments, according to an order issued on Thursday.
Among the most significant changes, Rupesh Kumar Thakur, who held the post of secretary (health and family welfare) along with additional charge of CEO, Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), has now been moved to serve solely as CEO of DUSIB.
Niharika Rai, secretary-cum-commissioner (transport), has been given additional charge as chairman and managing director of the Delhi Transport Corporation, while being divested of her earlier charge as secretary of tourism. The move places the city's public bus service directly under an officer already overseeing the broader transport portfolio.
In the health sector, Mekala Chaitanya Prasad, special secretary (health), has been given additional charge of special secretary (PWD), a move that divests Suneel Anchipaka of that responsibility. Ajay Kumar Gupta, commissioner (food safety), retains that role while gaining additional charge as managing director of the Delhi Transco Limited, chairman of IPGCL and PPCL, and chairman.



UP: Noida Airport to be renamed after PM Narendra Modi, announces CM Yogi Adityanath

Lucknow (Agency)
The Uttar Pradesh cabinet has approved a proposal to rename the Noida International Airport at Jewar in Gautam Buddh Nagar district as the 'Narendra Modi International Airport, Noida-Jewar'. Announcing the cabinet's decision on Friday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for bringing this mega greenfield project to the state. "The UP Cabinet is grateful to the Prime Minister for gifting the state the Noida International Airport (Jewar); this is set to become Uttar Pradesh's largest airport and, in the future, the country's largest aviation hub. Consequently, the Cabinet has also passed a proposal to rename the Noida International Airport as the Narendra Modi International Airport, Noida-Jewar," CM Yogi said.

Jewar airport
Notably, the Jewar airport was officially inaugurated by PM Modi on March 28 this year. It is the second international airport in the National Capital Region (NCR), after Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport. It is located about 72 km from the Indira Gandhi International Airport, 52 km from Noida, and 130 km from Agra. The Noida airport is expected to benefit a vast region encompassing Agra, Mathura, Aligarh, Ghaziabad, Meerut, Etawah, Bulandshahr, and Faridabad.
Phase I of the Noida International Airport has been developed at an estimated investment of around Rs 11,200 crore.

Man thrashed with iron rod, hockey stick by labour contractor, mason dies

Gurgaon. (Agency)
A 33-year-old worker died three days after he was allegedly beaten with an iron rod and a hockey stick following a dispute over work in Badshahpur, police said.The assault on Shrikesh Kumar, a native of Bhagalpur in Bihar, took place on Oct 4. Shrikesh and his brother, Abhinav Kumar, worked as labourers in the Badshahpur area.

According to the complaint filed by Abhinav, a dispute broke out between him, Shrikesh, contractor Jitendra and mason Sandeep over company material on Oct 4. The matter was resolved at the time, and the brothers returned to their shanty after finishing the day's work. However, Jitendra and Sandeep allegedly followed them home and started abusing them.

An altercation broke out during which the two men allegedly attacked Shrikesh with an iron rod and a hockey stick, hitting him on the head, following which he collapsed and lost consciousness. The accused fled the spot after the assault. Shrikesh was rushed to the Civil Hospital but was later referred to Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital in view of his critical condition. He succumbed to his injuries on Wednesday. Police have registered a case under BNS Section 103 (murder) based on the complaint filed at the Badshahpur station, naming Jitendra and Sandeep as the accused.

Police conducted a postmortem and handed over the body to the family. Further investigation is underway, and police teams are tracing the accused, who remain on the run, and conducting raids at all possible hideouts.

Greater Noida farmers protest inflated power bills, lack of subsidies

Noida. (Agency)
For the past couple of months, farmers in Greater Noida have been getting inflated electricity bills ranging from Rs 10,000 to Rs 20,000 from the usual Rs 2,000-Rs 3,000 a month. The farmers also said the discom was not providing a subsidy of 500 units on a 5-kilowatt connection. There are nearly 5,000 farmers and almost 2,000 of them claimed that they have such connections.

A delegation of farmers under the Bhartiya Kisan Union (Krishak) banner met Noida Power Company Limited officials over their concerns and set a one-month deadline for their resolution. They have warned the officials that they would take to the streets against NPCL after Nov 7 if the issues were not addressed.

The national president of the union, Krishna Nagar, said, "We have been asked to pay these 'arbitrary' prices for the past couple of months. This is not the first time that we were served such high bills. Every time we complain, we are told that these bills are due to overloading. This is completely false." Moreover, the discom has failed to increase the load capacity



despite multiple requests, he added.

Another core issue raised during the meeting was the absence of subsidies on tubewell connections. Farmers claimed that frequent power outages have added to their challenges.

Discussions were held with NPCL officials, including vice president Praveen Goyal, Subodh Tyagi, general manager Harendra Singh, Rajesh Srivastava, Sushil Sunar and Neeraj Singh. BKU district president Vikram Bhati said farmers have given a one-month deadline to the discom to resolve the issues. "If the issues are not resolved within this period, a major agitation will be launched against NPCL after Nov 7," said Bhati.

In response to these allegations, an NPCL spokesperson told that discussions were held with the farmers and that the allegation of 'arbitrary' electricity billing is completely false. "Every consumer with a tubewell connection is billed according to the electricity consumed.

Chhota Udepur Faces Potential Water Crisis as Unconrolled Sand Mining Raises Environmental Concerns

Mahanagar Metro Desk
Chhota Udepur, Gujarat: Concerns are mounting over the potential environmental consequences of alleged uncontrolled and illegal sand mining in the Chhota Udepur region of Gujarat. Critics have accused the state government of failing to effectively control the exploitation of natural resources, warning that continued mining could threaten groundwater reserves, damage river ecosystems and increase the risk of a future water crisis.Unregulated Sand Mining Raises Environmental ConcernsConcerns raised by local residents point to extensive sand extraction from riverbeds, allegedly involving heavy machinery such as excavators and the movement of overloaded dumpers. Environmental damage, changes to riverbeds and possible impacts on groundwater recharge have become major issues of concern.Environmentalists and concerned citizens have highlighted the need for stricter monitoring of mining activities. They warn that excessive extraction, if left unchecked, could have long-term consequences for local communities, agriculture and access to drinking water. However, the extent of illegal mining and its direct impact on groundwater levels require verification through official records, environmental assessments and independent investigations.Questions Over the 'Har Ghar Jal' InitiativeThe controversy has also raised questions about the effectiveness of drinking water initiatives, including the government's Jal Jeevan Mission, which aims to provide tap water to rural households.Critics argue that infrastructure alone cannot ensure long-term water security if natural water resources are depleted or damaged. They have called for a coordinated approach that combines a reliable drinking water supply with the protection of rivers, groundwater reserves and other natural resources.Residents in the region are concerned about water availability in the coming years, particularly if mining activities continue without adequate environmental safeguards.Calls for Government Accountability and Strict ActionThe issue has intensified demands for greater transparency and accountability from the authorities responsible for regulating mining operations. Citizens and environmental advocates are seeking effective inspections, strict enforcement of mining regulations and action against any individuals or operators found to be involved in illegal extraction.Authorities need to examine allegations of unlawful



mining, assess its environmental impact and make their findings public. Independent investigations would help establish whether regulatory failures or violations have contributed to the concerns raised by local communities.The future of Chhota Udepur's water resources depends on sustainable mining practices, effective environmental protection and responsible management of natural resources. Without timely intervention, the region could face serious ecological and water-security challenges.

When Two Hearts Become 'We,' Not 'Me'...

Mahanagar Metro Desk
Rupesh Solanki, Bhachau Marriage is not merely a relationship that unites two individuals; it is a sacred bond that makes two hearts lifelong companions in each other's joys and sorrows. Marriage often begins with love, dreams, and new hopes, but its true test comes through the ups and downs of life.In married life, love is as important as mutual trust, understanding, and communication. Sometimes, listening to each other patiently, sometimes forgiving each other's mistakes, and sometimes standing by one another without expecting anything in return—these seemingly small gestures are what make a relationship stronger.It is not necessary for two people to always have the same thoughts or opinions. Differences are natural, but the wisdom to prevent differences of opinion from turning into differences of heart is the true foundation of a successful married life. Harsh words spoken in anger can create distance in a relationship, while a single word spoken with love can bring two hearts closer again.In today's world, while life has become more comfortable, the time people give to each other is gradually decreasing. Amid mobile phones and the rush of everyday life, husbands and wives sometimes live under the same roof yet become emotionally distant. To keep a relationship alive, a little time, honest communication, and heartfelt affection are often more valuable than material comforts and luxuries.A successful marriage does not mean a relationship in which disagree



ments never occur; rather, it is one in which love does not diminish even after an argument. Where "we" is given greater importance than "I," the relationship grows deeper and stronger with time.It is easy to laugh together during moments of happiness, but standing firmly beside each other and holding each other's hand during difficult times is the true mark of a life partner. The true beauty of marriage does not lie merely in the seven vows taken around the sacred fire, but in standing by each other through every turn, every challenge, and every phase of life.

Effigy contractor's son second to succumb in Sahibabad community centre blast

Ghaziabad. (Agency)
Three days after a firecracker explosion at a community centre in Sahibabad where a Ravana effigy was being made ahead of Dussehra, Pilkhuwa resident Rishabh has died on Thursday of his injuries, police said. He is the second person to succumb to the blast. His father, Anil Kumar, the contractor engaged to make the effigy, died of his injuries on Oct 6. The explosion occurred on Oct 5 in a room where firecrackers were stored. The blast was so powerful that the walls of the community



centre were blown away and the doors were shattered. The awning of a nearby house was damaged. Cracks also appeared in the walls of three other houses. Police initially said the blast occurred while firecrackers were being placed inside the effigy. An investigation later found that workers were preparing breakfast in the room when a fire broke out, triggering the explosion.

Five people — Kumar (45), his sons Rajat (29) and Rishabh (25), and their associates Raju (35) and Mahendra (32) had been injured in the explosion. Three were shifted to Rajiv Gandhi Hospital in Delhi and two to Safdarjung Hospital. DCP (trans-Hindon zone) Rijul said they got the news from a hospital in Delhi that Rishabh had succumbed to his injuries in the afternoon.A police complaint had been made by GMC tax inspector grade II Prabhat Sharma. He said at the Nagar Nigam Ghaziabad Community Centre located in Lajpat Nagar, firecracker materials had been kept by some unidentified persons. "It is also to be taken into cognisance that no permission of any kind had been granted by the civic body for the said activity at the community centre. However, unidentified persons had kept firecrackers at the Community Centre in an unauthorised manner," DCP said.

100 roads set for an upgrade in a month in Gurgaon; delay fines on staff

Gurgaon. (Agency)
Haryana govt has set a 30-day deadline to upgrade 100 roads in the city identified as being in poor condition, while introducing financial penalties for employees found negligent in resolving civic complaints. The directions were issued by Haryana CM's chief principal secretary Rajesh Khullar at a meeting with officials of MCG, GMDA and HSVP at the PWD Rest House on Thursday. The three agencies have been asked to identify 100 roads, each at least 500 metres long, for improvement by Nov 7.

The exercise will involve more than pothole filling and patchwork. The identified roads will undergo comprehensive improvements, including recarpeting or end-to-end pavement work, street lighting, lane markings, footpaths, signage and beautification. Encroachments and garbage along the stretches will also have to be cleared.



An information board with a QR code will be installed on each of the 100 roads. Residents will be able to access details of the work, the concerned department and officer, and the scheduled start and completion dates. Officials said the move seeks to strengthen accountability by identifying the agency responsible for each project.

"The 100 roads will include roads falling under the jurisdiction of GMDA, MCG and HSVP, with all three agencies working in coordination to achieve the target of completing the works by Nov 7," Khullar said at the meeting. Khullar has also ordered the development of 10 "iconic roads" with comprehensive improvements. The plan includes designated smoking and non-smoking zones, fines for violations, wheelchair facilities and prominent display of rules and penalties. Enforcement personnel will use body cameras, while fines will be collected only through online modes. Within MCG limits, fines have also been proposed for spitting in public places.Officials were also directed to launch a "24-hour challenge" for civic complaints. Residents will be able to report major garbage accumulation points, large potholes, sewage overflows, defunct streetlights and tree-pruning requirements.

MCG to seek audio proof, satisfaction letters on civic complaints

Gurgaon. (Agency)
MCG will now seek direct confirmation from complainants before treating civic complaints received through X as resolved. Officials will be required to speak to residents, obtain a formal satisfaction letter and, where possible, retain recordings of the feedback calls, sources said. The move follows Haryana chief minister Nayab Singh Saini's Oct 2 review of civic grievances in the city, during which the govt found instances where complaints marked as disposed of in official records remained unresolved on the ground. Following the review, MCG held a meeting chaired by commissioner Pradeep Dahiya to strengthen the verification process, an MCG official said. "For complaints received through X, the concerned joint commissioner, sanitary inspectors or assistant sanitary inspectors will have to speak to the complainant, ascertain whether the action taken has actually satisfied the resident and obtain a satisfaction letter in the prescribed format," the official said, requesting anonymity. The civic body has prepared a format for the satisfaction letter. Officials also discussed retaining audio recordings of feedback calls as much as possible. In addition, a separate team from the commissioner's office will independently contact complainants to verify the action taken. This will provide a second level of verification, rather than leaving the official who marked a complaint as resolved as the sole authority to confirm its closure. Residents frequently use X to flag garbage, sewerage, sanitation and other civic problems after claiming they have not received satisfactory action through routine channels. During the Oct 2 review, it was noted that the CM's office had independently contacted complainants and compared their responses with the status reported by officials.

In some cases, complaints shown as resolved were found to persist on the ground. Following the review, MCG suspended a junior engineer and issued show-cause notices to two others after sewerage complaints marked as "resolved" on the e-Samadhan portal



were found to be continuing on the ground. The meeting also discussed an accountability measure for garbage vulnerable points (GVPs) under the GVP Mukt Abhiyan. Once a GVP is cleared, the concerned joint commissioner will be personally responsible for ensuring that garbage does not reaccumulate at the site. MCG had launched the GVP-free city campaign from Oct 2 to 11, targeting 21 garbage-sensitive points across Gurgaon for cleaning and improvement.

Irregularities in Medical Test Kit and Equipment Procurement in Uttar Pradesh; 100-Fold Order Leads to GM's Dismissal

Lucknow. (Agency)
Irregularities have come to light in the procurement of medical test kits and equipment for government hospitals in Uttar Pradesh. The Uttar Pradesh Medical Supplies Corporation Limited allegedly placed a procurement order nearly 100 times higher than the actual requirement due to an error in interpreting the tender rates. General Manager (Supply Chain) Sugandha Sharma has been dismissed in connection with the matter.According to media reports, a tender was issued in 2024 for the procurement of HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C testing kits and related equipment using funds from the National Health Mission (NHM). The company had reportedly quoted prices on a per-unit basis, but officials allegedly treated the rates as prices per packet while issuing the purchase order. This resulted in an order for nearly 100 times the required quantity of testing kits and equipment.Allegations have also been raised that the procurement process resulted in undue benefits to the company. A complaint was submitted to Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, following which an inquiry was initiated at the Health Department level. Some NHM officials involved in the procurement process had also faced action earlier.The matter has now reached the court.

From Delhi school teacher to CBI net: 34-year-old sanitary inspector held taking Rs 5 lakh

Chandigarh. (Agency)
At 34, Shakti's journey from a primary school teacher in Delhi to a sanitary inspector in the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation has ended with the CBI arresting him for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 5 lakh from a contractor.
On Wednesday, the investigating agency arrested him for allegedly accepting the cash. The CBI alleged that he had demanded Rs 14 lakh in total to clear a firm's pending bills and future bills. The CBI said the contractor alleged that Shakti threatened to withhold bills and have the firm's tender cancelled if the money was not paid. The agency received the complaint on October 7 and set up a trap the same day. Shakti was produced before a Chandigarh court on Thursday and sent to 14-day judicial custody. The agency searched his office and residential premises after his arrest, and said it seized incriminating documents as well as documents relating to immovable property.
The 34-year-old was born in 1992 and graduated from Delhi University's North Campus. Before working for the civic body, Shakti had spent three years working as a primary school teacher in Delhi. An associate said



Shakti was also quite fond of digital creation. He joined the civic administration through direct recruitment in 2018 after he cleared the examination for sanitary inspectors. During his eight years in the corporation, he worked in the Health and Sanitation Department and was assigned responsibilities linked to the dumping ground and vehicles, among other duties. There are around 50 sanitary inspectors in the corporation, besides eight Chief Sanitary Inspectors and Health Supervisors who form part of the supervisory structure.The firm, M/s People Connect Services, told the CBI that it provided manpower, earthmovers and tippers to the Chandigarh civic body. The complaint to the CBI alleged that the demand for money was building up over several months, the firm said.
In March last year, the firm was awarded a three-year contract at different landfill sites across Chandigarh.

Two-Day Rail Block on This Route in Uttar Pradesh

Routes of Several Trains, Including Amrit Bharat and Intercity, Diverted

A two-day traffic block is being undertaken on the Gorakhpur–Gonda route in Uttar Pradesh to carry out automatic signalling work. As a result, several trains will remain cancelled, while the routes of several others will be diverted. The changes are expected to affect train operations on the route during the block period.



Gonda. (Agency)
Non-interlocking work will be carried out between Swami Narayan Chhapia and Mankapur stations on the Gorakhpur–Gonda route in Uttar Pradesh on October 10 and 11 for the commissioning of an automatic signalling system.
The Railways has decided to impose a traffic block to facilitate the work.As a result, several trains, including Amrit Bharat and Intercity services, will operate on diverted routes, while some passenger and local trains will remain cancelled for two days.Sumit Kumar, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) of North Eastern Railway, provided this information.
Detailed information is available on the Railways' official website.The Railways had earlier decided to impose a block on September 26 and 27 for the same work.
However, the block was subsequently cancelled due to unavoidable reasons.

Gorakhpur Passenger and Several Other Trains Cancelled

Several trains will remain cancelled due to the traffic block on the Gorakhpur–Gonda route for automatic signalling work.On October 10, the following trains will remain cancelled: 64220 Ayodhya Cantt–Mankapur MEMU, 64223/64224 Mankapur–Ayodhya Dham Junction–Mankapur MEMU and 64217 Mankapur–Ayodhya Cantt MEMU.The 55093 Gorakhpur–Gonda Passenger and 55091 Gonda–Sitapur City Passenger will remain cancelled on October 10 and 11.Similarly, the 55094 Gonda–Gorakhpur Passenger and 55092 Sitapur City–Gonda Passenger will remain cancelled on October 11 and 12.The 65115/65116 Bhatni–Ayodhya Dham Junction–Bhatni MEMU will also remain cancelled on October 10.

Varanasi Intercity Express Will Not Reach Gonda

Several express trains will operate on shortened routes due to the traffic block on the Gorakhpur–Gonda section for automatic signalling work.On October 10, the 14213 Varanasi Junction–Nepalganj Road Express will terminate its journey at Ayodhya Dham station.On October 11, the 14214 Nepalganj Road–Varanasi Junction Express will originate from Ayodhya Dham instead of Nepalganj Road. The train will remain cancelled between Nepalganj Road and Ayodhya Dham.The 14233 Prayagraj Sangam–Mankapur Express will remain cancelled between Ayodhya Cantt and Mankapur on October 10.

5 held for pelting stones at Gurdwara Manji Sahib; SGPC warns against spreading rumours

The incident later triggered allegations that gurdwara staff had set fire to shanties where migrants lived near the historic shrine. Hardeep Singh denied the allegation.



Ludhiana. (Agency)
The Ludhiana Police Thursday registered an FIR against five people for allegedly pelting stones at the langar hall the Gurdwara Sri Manji Sahib, Alamgir, following an altercation with the shrine staff on October 5.According to the gurdwara management, a migrant who had come to partake langar was turned away by a sewadar. Gurdwara manager Hardeep Singh said the man appeared "suspicious" and intoxicated. "He went away, but after some time, he along with his accomplices, pelted three stones at the langar hall. We immediately called the police and five accused were detained," he said. The incident later triggered allegations that gurdwara staff had set fire to shanties where migrants lived near the historic shrine. Hardeep Singh denied the allegation.
"We did not set any shanty on fire. The migrants had vacated the jhuggis after we asked them to. Later, maybe some Nihangs came and set the vacant shanties on fire. The shanties were not on gurdwara land but on private vacant plots nearby," he said, adding that the situation is completely normal and migrants from the area continue to partake in langar.Police had initially recorded a Daily Diary Report (DDR) and detained the five people under preventive provisions. An FIR was registered Thursday after photos and videos purportedly showing the incident began circulating on social media. The five booked migrants are from Bihar, said police.
Inspector Gurmeet Singh, SHO of Dehlon police station, said police had filed a DDR on October 5, and detained five people who were sent to judicial custody. "Today, we have registered an FIR against them under Section 298 of the BNS.

She Eloped and Married Him 18 Months Ago; Husband Slits Wife's Throat and Flees

Dehradun. (Agency)
In Dehradun's Kachta village in Kalsi, a man allegedly murdered his wife by slitting her throat with a sickle following a domestic dispute. The accused fled after the incident. The revenue police took possession of the body and launched a search for the accused.According to the police, Manoj (27), son of Baliya, is a farmer who lives in Kachta, a revenue village in Kalsi block. Around one-and-a-half years ago, he had married Neelu (20) after a love affair.A love story that began



with the couple eloping and marrying eventually became troubled by frequent quarrels and disputes. Within just 18 months, the relationship turned tragic, shattering their once-happy world. The marriage, which had begun with promises to live and die together, ended in a horrifying tragedy, leaving behind shattered dreams and immeasurable grief. A domestic dispute between a husband and wife in Kachta village of Vikasnagar took a horrific turn on Thursday afternoon, leaving those who witnessed the aftermath shaken. Neelu had left her home and family to marry the man whose hand she had chosen to hold, but he allegedly killed her with a sickle. The shocking incident not only devastated two families but also left the entire community stunned.Manoj, a resident of Kachta village, works in agriculture and lives with his joint family. Around one-and-a-half years ago, he had married Neelu after a love affair. Initially, everything seemed fine between the couple, but for some time, they had reportedly been having frequent disagreements and arguments over one issue or another.

Police Conduct Raids to Trace the Accused

A team comprising the Naib Tehsildar and revenue police reached the spot. After inspecting the crime scene and collecting evidence, the police took custody of the body and sent it for post-mortem examination.Naib Tehsildar Ravindra Aswal said that an investigation is underway to determine the motive behind the woman's murder, the circumstances surrounding the dispute, and every aspect of the incident.

Flood Threat Looms Near Police Headquarters in Lucknow as Cracks Appear in Embankment

The threat of flooding from the Gomti River is now looming over areas near the Police Headquarters in the Uttar Pradesh capital, Lucknow. The water level continues to rise, while cracks have appeared in the embankment in the area, raising concerns about the possibility of flooding in nearby localities.

Lucknow. (Agency)
There has been no relief from the Gomti River floods in Lucknow even after ten days. Thousands of people have been forced to leave their homes and are living in relief camps and hotels. All efforts by the authorities appear to have failed to bring the situation under control.Meanwhile, large cracks have appeared after the soil beneath a newly constructed embankment opposite the Police Headquarters in Sector 7 of Gomti Nagar Extension began to sink, raising fears of flooding in the area.A section of the embankment opposite Orange Apartments has subsided towards the Gomti River. The cracks that have developed on the embankment are no longer minor. The condition of the embankment is clearly visible when viewed from the G-20 Road side, raising concerns about the safety of the surrounding areas.
The Hindustan visited the site on Thursday to assess the condition of the embankment. The



section where the soil has subsided shows an unusually sunken stretch of ground, with large cracks also visible in the surrounding area.This has heightened concerns that if the water level of the Gomti River continues to rise at the same pace and soil erosion persists, this section of the embankment could become even weaker.

Low-Lying Area, Several Buildings at Risk

The area in Gomti Nagar Extension lies at a relatively lower elevation on the other side of the embankment. If the weakened section of the embankment gives way, floodwater could reach residential areas. Localities near the Police Headquarters could be affected, with possible consequences for government departments, hospitals, Sushant Golf City and areas along Sultanpur Road.The water level of the Gomti River is still rising, making the subsidence of soil beneath the embankment a matter of serious concern. If continued pressure from the river and soil slippage persist, the existing cracks could widen further, potentially weakening the structure even more.

Drain Breaches Again, Flooding Returns to Ekana-Palassio Area

A fresh crisis emerged on Thursday morning after the Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) worked through the night to tackle waterlogging around Ekana Stadium and Palassio Mall. The drain that had been blocked at a particular point to prevent water from entering the area and facilitate drainage broke open again at around 8 a.m.Following the breach, water that had receded from Ekana Stadium, Palassio Mall, the Disaster Management Department, Mercure Hotel, Tender Palm Hospital and nearby areas began accumulating again, worsening the waterlogging situation.

Key Middleman Arrested in Constable Recruitment Exam Scam; 9 Lakh Deal Uncovered, Several Others Sought

Shravan had allegedly arranged a deal worth ?9 lakh to help a candidate named Dhananjay pass the recruitment examination through his acquaintance and middleman, Neeraj. Dhananjay was caught at the Residential Model Middle School in Bhainsasur, Bihar Sharif.

Patna. (Agency)
The Economic Offences Unit (EOU) has arrested Shravan Kumar, who allegedly acted as a middleman at an examination centre in Nalanda in connection with the 2023 Bihar Police Constable recruitment written examination scam. He has been sent to jail.Shravan Kumar is a resident of Hadinagar village under Sigori police station in Patna district.The written examination for the 2023 constable recruitment drive was cancelled due to the alleged malpractice. During interrogation, the arrested middleman provided several important details. Based on the information obtained, the investigating agency has launched further inquiries into the case.
According to information provided by the Economic Offences Unit (EOU), Shravan had allegedly arranged a deal worth ?9 lakh through his acquaintance and middleman, Neeraj, to help Dhananjay pass the examination.Dhananjay was arrested during the examination three years ago at the Residential Model Middle School in Bhainsasur, Bihar Sharif. A case related to the incident was registered at Laheri police station in Nalanda district, and the EOU is conducting the investigation.The EOU is also searching for Neeraj in connection with the case.
Shravan admitted that he had struck a deal worth ?9 lakh to help Dhananjay Kumar pass the written examination. Under the arrangement, another person, acting as a proxy candidate, was supposed to appear for the examination in Dhananjay's place.To facilitate the fraud, a



photograph resembling the proxy candidate's face had allegedly been affixed to Dhananjay's admit card. However, the proxy candidate went to appear for the examination at a different location. Subsequently, Dhananjay arrived at the examination centre himself, allegedly using a Bluetooth device provided by the middleman, and was caught.

Two Washington visits that sought to redirect diplomacy

Chinese President Xi Jinping's September 23-25 State visit to the US was reminiscent of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's official visit to Washington during September 15-17, 2000. It had been preceded by Bill Clinton's trip to India earlier that year—the first such US presidential visit in 22 years.Foreign affairs are instant history nowadays, and Clinton's and Vajpayee's back-to-back trips happened 26 years ago. More than a quarter century having elapsed, the intricate details of these visits would today be remembered for drawing any comparison mostly by those who have a professional interest in diplomacy.Indian public discussions and analyses about Xi's talks in the White House have so far largely celebrated that this State visit did not produce any breakthroughs or many tangible results. This is in line with popular identification in recent years with India's illusorily macho foreign policy. Such an attitude puts down anything about China or Pakistan, and casts negatively everything about these two perceived "enemy" countries. This does India and Indians a disservice, because correctly understanding and analysing activities and initiatives in the immediate neighbourhood is critical to India's own welfare and success.Vajpayee's visit 26 years ago was exactly like Xi's latest travel to Washington in several ways. India was then under an array of sanctions from the 1998 nuclear tests. Barring specialists, most Indians could not have been expected to understand that the sanctions were mandatory and automatic under the Glenn Amendment of the US Congress, read with two other related laws. Only a few of these penalties were waived—through hurried Congressional amendments—as a prelude to Clinton's trip. Vajpayee rejected arguments even within his party that he should not go to Washington while India was still under sanctions and went ahead with the trip.Just as Xi did last month. Although one week prior to the Chinese President's arrival in the White House, US President Donald Trump had signed into law an imperious legislation that authorises 100 percent tariffs on China—and on India—for buying Russian energy.Like Vajpayee then, Xi is now convinced that there is more to gain by meeting the US President and bilateral relations in the future could not be held hostage to disputes and disagreements anchored in pride alone. Unlike India, China has a closed political system. So, one can only speculate if there was opposition within the Communist Party of China (CPC) to Xi's visit under the shadow of new penalties, just as in Vajpayee's BJP.

A straw in the wind was the presence of top CPC leaders on the Chinese side at the State dinner in honour of Xi. It was only when the White House released the guest list for the dinner that those outside the official framework on both sides realised that Xi had brought along party apparatchiks as part of his delegation to Washington. The White House's guest details listed these apparatchiks as belonging to the CPC and not the Chinese government.

Conceivably conceding to the party's supremacy over the government, Xi wore a Mao suit at the black-tie dinner, as did the CPC officials. If Xi was under flak from the party—like Vajpayee was—bringing the 'comrades' to see for themselves what was at stake in the bilateral engagement and donning a Mao suit—which is high on symbolism—was diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. The importance of these symbols appears to have totally escaped attention in India, where the bandhgala national dress has been devalued by its routine overuse, unlike China's Mao suits.

Instead of rubbishing the Trump-Xi talks as inconsequential, Indians must introspect on Xi's gestures—like in the bygone Mao Zedong era—and ask themselves if every action of their own leadership has a time and place while dealing with the only superpower today.

CEC is not the Election Commission

The Chief Justice has made it clear that the Supreme Court did not give its approval to the modified Form 6

FOR months, the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls has put the voter on trial. On Monday, the Election Commission of India's (ECI) own decision-making came under scrutiny before the Supreme Court.

The Court was hearing petitions arising from reports that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had recorded objections on at least 14 occasions to decisions or actions taken in the name of the Commission. Senior advocate Vikas Singh sought the immediate suspension of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar. The Court rightly declined such an extraordinary step ex parte and on the basis of newspaper reports.But what the Bench said next was more important. Chief Justice Surya Kant observed that the Commission's decisions are expected to be unanimous; where unanimity is not possible, the majority must prevail. Justice Joymalya Bagchi stated that if records show particular decisions were taken contrary to this requirement, the Court could injunct them and declare them ultra vires.

A notice has now been issued — for proving the wrongdoing, those concerned must be heard. But the controversy has changed fundamentally. The question is no longer merely whether SIR was a sound administrative exercise. A prior question has arisen: were some disputed actions legally decisions of the ECI at all?

Section 18 of the 2023 law is clear. The procedure for transacting and allocating the Commission's business may be regulated by unanimous decisions. Its substantive business should, as far as possible, be unanimous; when Commissioners differ, the majority decides.

The principle is older than the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act. The CEC is the chairman of the Commission, not its commander. The Supreme Court said as much in the TN Seshan case. In a three-member constitutional body, two constitute the majority.Differences within a collegiate institution are normal, even healthy. What matters is what happens afterwards. If one Commissioner proposes A and the other two record B, A cannot be labelled as the decision of "Election Commission of India".

Consider Form 6. It is a statutory form under the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960. Internal records cited by The Indian Express showed that Commissioner Joshi objected in May to adding SIR requirements through an administrative direction, saying that alteration of a statutory form required amendment of the Rules. Commissioner Sandhu reportedly concurred. Yet the altered online process appeared on ECINet.

The issue acquired a new dimension on Monday. When the issue of the modified Form 6 was raised, the Chief Justice made it clear that the Supreme Court had not approved it and indicated that the Court would examine "who has modified what". That question is now central.

Form 6 has acquired another curious role after SIR. The Commission has directed officials in states and union territories where SIR is complete to compare old and



revised rolls, identify eligible voters who disappeared and facilitate their re-enrolment. This corrective exercise is most welcome. But why should a voter registered for 10, 20 or 30 years, whose name vanished during SIR, be required to use a form meant for "new" voters and falsely declare that he or she is applying for inclusion for the first time — a criminal offence carrying one-year imprisonment? A deleted voter is not a new voter. He needs restoration, not first-time registration. If existing forms do not fit, the Rules should be amended and a new form, say 6X, created.West Bengal raises an even larger institutional question. After 27.16 lakh voters were deleted through the adjudication process, 22.21 lakh reportedly appealed for restoration. Another 16.10 lakh appeals challenged voters who had been included. Commissioner Sandhu reportedly asked on file who was authorised to file these appeals "on behalf of ECI", and by whom. That deserves a full answer.

So does Goa, where Electoral Registration Officers reportedly found 97 electors eligible for restoration, but the centrally controlled software did not permit restoration before the publication of the final roll. Software cannot overrule statutory officers. ECINet is a tool of electoral administration; it cannot become a parallel electoral authority.The Commission's September 26 press note announced several corrections: agendas would be circulated before meetings, minutes issued, IT changes institutionally scrutinised, directions of Election Commissioners meticulously complied with and ECINet reviewed for conformity with electoral law. All are welcome. But every correction raises a question about the past. Why were such safeguards not automatic, and which earlier decisions had actually received the approval of the three-member Commission?The Commission says its decisions were unanimous and differing observations were part of the deliberations. That defence should now be demonstrated from the record. The Supreme Court has wisely not prejudged the issue. The files can speak.

What India needs is a transparent institutional account: what proposal was placed before the Commission, who approved it, who dissented, what was finally decided and under whose authority it was implemented.

The stakes go beyond one CEC or one revision of electoral rolls. The ECI derives enormous authority from Article 324, but constitutional independence does not mean freedom from the law. An institution demanding obedience to electoral law must itself display exemplary fidelity to it.For years I have defended the ECI precisely because it is an institution, not an individual. Its credibility was built over decades by Commissioners, officials, polling personnel and voters who trusted that the umpires followed their own rules.The Supreme Court has pronounced no one guilty — yet. But one proposition requires no adjudication: where Parliament has created a three-member Commission and provided that disagreement is settled by majority, no individual can substitute himself for the institution.

Asian Games outcome must spur focused prep for Los Angeles 2028

For a country intent on hosting several multi-discipline Games over the next decade, having shiny infrastructure is just one part of the puzzle

With the euphoria of the Asian Games behind us, it's time to reflect on India's campaign. On the face of it, finishing fourth on the medals table—behind the three continental sporting superpowers, China, Japan and South Korea—is a creditable achievement. Being the best of the rest on the medals count was especially praiseworthy after an underwhelming opening to the quadrennial campaign. Thanks to a glut of gold from the archers, wrestlers, boxers, hockey players and cricketers, India's tally got a late push in the second week.It is an ideal place to start afresh, with two years to go until the Los Angeles Olympics. The stakeholders, including the sports ministry, must now identify sports where there is a bright talent pool. Even if they are not in medal-rich disciplines like swimming or cycling, spotting and backing reliable medal winners in a few sports could provide the platform to start building the next dreams. For LA, there should be additional focus on boxing, wrestling,



cricket, hockey and archery, especially after the addition of compound archery, a branch where India is genuinely world-class.

On the flip side, the tepid performance in shooting and athletics is a cause for concern. Shooting is a legacy sport for India, but the shooters were mostly off-target in Nagoya. With the qualifying system for the Olympics set to begin in about a month at the World Championships, the sport's federation, athletes, support staff and the ministry ought to come together to ensure two things: that levels do not drop and players earn quotas as soon as possible, and that systemic gaps are plugged without disrupting the whole programme.

For a country intent on hosting several multi-discipline Games over the next decade, having shiny infrastructure is just one part of the puzzle. The grander legacy of hosting such Games is in building a sustainable talent pool of athletes capable of winning medals on the biggest stages. For that to happen, planning and execution have to happen like a well-oiled machine. It's why there is no scope for resting on laurels or reflecting on the gold and silver already bagged. The preparation for Los Angeles must begin right away.

Faithline | Remembering, rejoicing

Even in wealth and affluence, the Jewish community exudes positivity in the centuries of their ancestors' plight with humility and respect. They sing and dance to commemmorate rejoining, which is an integral part of Indian culture, too

Last night was the conclusion of the Jewish festivals of Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah. These festivals follow the week-long Jewish festival of Sukkot. Shemini Atzeret means the 'Eighth Day of Assembly' and is a distinct holiday that immediately follows Sukkot. It includes the Yizkor memorial prayer, literally 'May God remember' in Hebrew, for departed relatives, and introduces Tefillat Geshem, a prayer for rain, since winter is the rainy season in Israel.Simchat Torah means 'Rejoicing in the Torah' and celebrates the conclusion of the annual Torah-reading cycle and its immediate restart, reading from Genesis. Synagogues hold lively processions, including dancing with the Torah scrolls.

The preceding festival, Sukkot, is a seven- to eight-day harvest festival that also commemorates the '40 years' that Israelites wandered in the Sinai Desert after fleeing Egypt. Forty is a symbolic number meaning 'many' just as '16,000 gopis' is a symbolic number meaning 'every soul'. Sukkot means 'hut', recalling the temporary shelters that the wandering Jews lived in as homeless refugees. It combines gratitude for the fall harvest with remembrance of divine protection in the wilderness.

So, Jews build a temporary outdoor hut roofed with plant material where they practically live that week. I've seen the palm-frond hut built every year for Sukkot in Bombay, in my school, by our Jewish principal. The inside is decorated with attractive harvest produce like oranges, pomegranates and gourds. Warm lighting is the norm, and Indian Jews were known to light diyas, set carefully away from the inflammable walls of the palm hut, and also string up chains of electric lights as is done for Diwali and Gurpurab.Thus, even amid wealth, the Jews remember the plight of their ancestors with humility and respect.

During prayer, worshippers shake a symbolic bundle of lulav (palm frond, myrtle and willow) and an etrog (citrus fruit) in six directions to show that God is everywhere.

I've read that unlike other Jewish holidays, Sukkot does not have strictly prescribed foods. Because meals must be carried outdoors into the hut, menus are kept hearty but simple. Across different cultures, stuffing vegetables or dough signifies abundance, symbolising a wrapping of 'hidden blessings'. Ashkenazi or Western Jewish families serve stuffed cabbage rolls and knishes, usually potatoes in dough, and I recall trying my first knish years ago from a street vendor's cart in Manhattan, for all of one dollar.



Sephardic or Eastern Jew households serve meat-stuffed onions and stuffed grape leaves (dolma). I like dolma and cabbage rolls, and I once served vegetarian versions as side dishes at small dinner parties for friends. They were stuffed with a savoury rice-and-mushroom mix, with 'curry sauce' (white sauce flavoured with Bolst's curry powder) poured on top. My friends liked the gentle novelty of it, as much as they liked carrot-date salad, another popular Sukkot dish.Dipping challah bread in honey is customary during Sukkot. This deeply rooted Jewish custom serves as a physical prayer for a 'good and sweet new year' (Shanah Tova U'metuka). While this ritual is mostly associated with Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, Jewish tradition extends the practice through the entire autumn holiday season, including Sukkot.I particularly like that the Jews sang and danced to celebrate last night's festival, Simchat Torah, or Rejoicing in the Torah. That is such an important part of Indian culture, too, that one feels an instant affinity, because both happen for the same reason—in thanksgiving to God for blessings received. Despite their tormented history of centuries, the Jews exude positivity and never miss a chance to rejoice, which, too, feels very Indian.

Indeed, a Jewish devotional verse about the human need to celebrate holy events goes: "Whenever the Israelite rejoices in their festivals, praise the Lord, adorn the table with food and don fine clothes, the angels above inquire: 'Why do the Israelites indulge themselves so much?' God replies, 'They have an important guest with them today.'"

I have read that during the rest of the year, it is customary to dip challah in salt. This tradition stems from biblical times, when the dining table represented a holy altar and salt represented the bond with God. However, from Rosh Hashanah to Sukkot, honey replaces salt as a joyful, hope-driven change.In the Torah, honey is a recurring symbol of divine favour and agricultural abundance. Israel is famously described as a 'land of milk and honey'. Thus, dipping bread, 'the staff of life' in that culture, in honey expresses gratitude for the sustenance provided by God. I thought of that at Mount Nebo in Jordan, when I saw 'the Promised Land' that Moses is believed to have been shown from that very spot. And I thought of the ancient Jewish prophets again, when taken to visit 'Abel's tomb' in Syria, created by an Ottoman governor in the late 16th century.

Moreover, in Jewish mysticism and classical poetry like the 'Song of Songs', the teachings of the Torah are frequently compared to the sweetness of honey. The 'Song of Songs', or Solomon's Song in the Old Testament, is akin to our Gita Govinda, where romantic love is an allegory for the jivatma's love for the Paramatma. In the 'Song of Songs' 5:1, the speaker says, "I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey; I have drunk my wine and my milk," celebrating the fullness and satisfaction of that love.

Go tripping around Mysore

With the places to visit near Mysore as stunning as the city itself, you will have plenty to choose from. While there is no comparing the wonderful Hogenakkal Falls that is just a drive of 4 hours away, Bandipur National Park too is quite alluring for nature lovers. Kerala aficionados can drive off to Kochi, Wayanad or the startlingly scenic Kumarakom. Ooty, Kozhikode and Coonoor are quite popular with anyone seeking a solitary getaway. Most of these places are quite accessible via road and make for a perfect trip to Mysore and around.

Wayanad

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

Kumarakom

Part of the Kuttanad region, picturesque Kumarakom is an archipelago scattered on the eastern edge of the Vembanad Lake. This area's natural splendour and way of life were vividly described in Arundhati Roy's Man Booker Prize-winning, 'The God of Small Things'. Kumarakom has a string of luxury resorts including the Coconut Lagoon, Kumarakom Lake Resort and Vivanta by Taj - Kumarakom, located right on the backwaters and guests can rove about the canals on boating and fishing trips. The 14-acre Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary is an ornithologist's paradise and home to egrets, darters, herons, herons, waterfowls and kingfishers. The sanctuary also welcomes seasonal guests including the elusive Siberian stork, between the months of November and May.

Kochi

Ancient meets contemporary in Kochi, a lively city at just an hour's drive from Alleppey. Posh cafes sit right by the side of Chinese fishing nets that were installed here in 1350 AD; India's largest man-made island is a major attraction and so is the Paradesi Synagogue that was built in the year 1560. St Francis CSI Church once housed the remains of Vasco da Gama and is also the oldest European church in India. Kochi also hosts the world famous Kochi-Muziris Biennale, an event that sees much of the city turning into an art exhibition ground. With its potpourri of history, culture, arts and the great Kerala cuisine, Kochi makes for a perfect short trip from Alleppey.

Coonoor

An erstwhile summer refuge to the British, Coonoor retains its colonial tinge to this day, with its club culture, well established boarding schools, sophisticated architecture and a distinct plantation lifestyle. Travellers love this tea town for its relatively quieter environs as compared to Ooty, and if you're drawn to the outdoors, here are our top picks for how you can fill your days.

Bandipur National Park

Bandipur National Park one of the most stunning National Parks in India. Situated between the picturesque Western Ghats next to the Mysore-Ooty highway in Karnataka, the Park was once the private hunting reserve for the Maharaja of Mysore. It's now home to elephants, gaurs, tigers, sloth bears, muggers, Indian rock pythons and Dholes. The park was established in 1974 as a tiger reserve under Project Tiger and has a good number of Tigers. Birds like the jungle fowl and green pigeon are also found here.

Ooty

The most famous hill station south of the Vindhyas, Ootacamund's resplendent tea plantations and red-roofed bungalows still carry echoes of its colonial past. Originally a densely forested area in the Nilgiri mountains, it was converted into a summer retreat for the British in the 19th century. The undeniable natural beauty of Ooty (as it's universally referred to) and its misty green trails continues to draw visitors every year. Ooty is pleasant all year round, but the summer months are the high season. If you want to avoid the crowds and don't mind a drizzle then head here between August and November, when the rains turn the hills a luxuriant green.

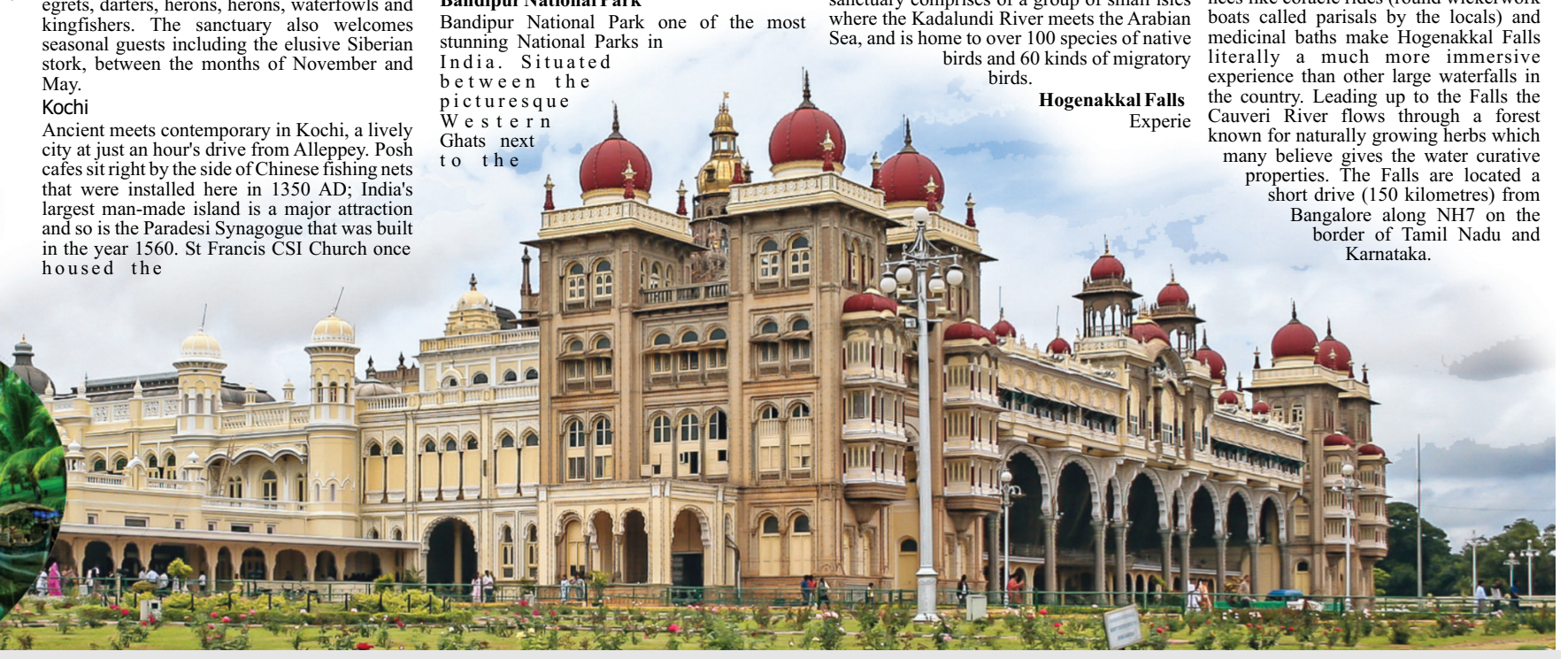
Kozhikode

Less-known than the backwaters of central Kerala, the backwaters around Kozhikode are also not as touristy and consequently much less crowded. Houseboats can be hired at the pier near the Purrakkattiri Bridge on the Ullery-Perambra road, 10 kilometres outside Kozhikode. The prettiest routes wind along the Canoly Canal, Kallai River and Elathur. An excursion to the scenic Kadalundi Bird Sanctuary, set amidst hillocks and by an estuary, is highly recommended. The sanctuary comprises of a group of small isles where the Kadalundi River meets the Arabian Sea, and is home to over 100 species of native birds and 60 kinds of migratory birds.

Hogenakkal Falls

Experiences like coracle rides (round wickerwork boats called parisals by the locals) and medicinal baths make Hogenakkal Falls literally a much more immersive experience than other large waterfalls in the country. Leading up to the Falls the Cauveri River flows through a forest known for naturally growing herbs which many believe gives the water curative properties. The Falls are located a short drive (150 kilometres) from Bangalore along NH7 on the border of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.





Top 5 places to visit in Dooars

With an unspoilt terrain and the mighty Himalayas forming a stunning backdrop, Dooars is a paradise for nature lovers. Many may not be aware of the fact that there are many places to visit in Dooars. Duar means door in Bengali and this region has been aptly named Dooars or Duars as it is the door to Bhutan and North East India. Veined by mighty rivers like Teesta, Torsa, Murti, Jaldhaka, Dyna and Sankosh, the region is blessed with dense forests and exotic wildlife. Nature lovers would have an unforgettable time in this region exploring its rich flora and fauna as well as beautiful landscape.

From the rippling rivulets of Jhalong and the picturesque valleys of Buxa with forests marked by walking trails to the riverbeds at Jaldapara and the lush greenery of Gorumara National Park, these places are a treat for the eyes. These parks, however, remain close during the monsoon season. Travellers coming to this stunning place around November-December can be a part of Raas Mela which is one of the ancient fairs held here. As per the Bengali calendar, the day of full moon (Purnima) in the month of Kartik marks the beginning of the fair. So plan your trip to this lesser-known gem to create memories that can be cherished for a lifetime.

Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary

Not too far from Gorumara National Park lies Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary, another hidden treasure of Dooars. A drive through some of the verdant tea gardens in the undulating plains of Dooars will take you to Chapramari. The area derives its name from two words—chapra (referring to a variety of fish found in north Bengal) and mari (meaning plenty). Covering an area of 9.6 sq km, the sanctuary boasts of a diverse range of flora and fauna that delights nature lovers.

Chapramari was declared a national reserve forest in 1895 and later, renamed as a wildlife reserve in 1939. After a few decades, in 1998, it was designated a wildlife sanctuary. The region is famous for its elephants that can be spotted easily. In addition, gaur is commonly found here. The sanctuary is also inhabited by Royal Bengal tiger, boars, deer, leopard, reptiles and various other animals. If you love birdwatching, do remember to carry a pair of binoculars to catch a glimpse of colourful birds like parrot, kingfisher and green pigeon, among many others. For accommodation, there are just a few options available in the area. Hence, whenever you visit Dooars, spend some time in this peaceful retreat in the foothills of the mighty Himalayas.

Buxa Tiger Reserve

A beautiful location in the lap of nature interspersed with the River Jayanti, mountains and dense forests—that's Buxa for you. The area is however more popular for Buxa Tiger Reserve, which is one of its kind in eastern Himalayas. Situated in Alipurduar, the reserve actually consists of the former Buxa Forest Division and a part of the Cooch Behar Forest Division. It was set up in the year 1983 and was given the status of a national park in 1992.

The reserve's rich biodiversity has been attracting tourists for years now and has become a popular escape for tired souls who love to relax in the lap of nature. The area, approximately 760 sq km, encompasses a mix of different types of forests—riverine, savannah, evergreen, sal and others. The topography and climate not only supports a rich variety of plant species but also animals. Visitors can spot mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fishes, such as tigers, civets, red jungle fowls, leopards, elephants, gaurs, porcupines, rhesus macaque, mahseer, tortoise and butterflies.

Buxa is also an absolute delight for birdwatchers. Birds like red stars, wagtails, fork-tails, ibisbill, great pied hornbills, and the trans-Himalayan migratory goosander can be spotted here. A number of migratory birds too make Buxa their temporary home, such as gargani teal, common teal, white-eyed pochard and the large whistling teal at the Narathali Lake. The black-necked crane, which is a rarity in India, can be spotted in Buxa during winters. Besides, visitors can also explore other attractions of the region, such as Buxa Fort, Jayanti and Rajabhatkhawa. For accommodation, homestays and resorts are available in the region. Buxa Tiger Reserve, a peaceful retreat, is definitely a not-to-miss attraction during a visit to Dooars.

Rasikbil Bird Sanctuary

The area derives its name from a lake named Rasikbil in Cooch Behar district of West Bengal. The lake is surrounded by low water land or marshland, which provides appropriate dwelling atmosphere for birds. Rasikbil is one of the five such low water lands in the area, others being Neeldaba, Bochamari, Shankhadanga and Raichangmari. No wonder, the area attracts a lot of migratory birds year-round, besides being home to several other resident birds. So, if birdwatching is one of your favourite hobbies, then you would love your visit to the magnificent Rasikbil Bird Sanctuary.

Do remember to carry a pair of binoculars so that you can easily spot some exquisite species of birds such as cormorants, ibis, parrots, owls and storks. You can also catch glimpses of water birds like lesser whistling teal, shoveler, wigeon duck, small blue kingfisher and gadwall. Apart from birdwatching, you can choose to indulge in other activities as well. Travellers often opt for boating in the lake and nature walk in the forests. They also visit the aviary and tortoise rescue centre, deer park, python house, crocodile rehabilitation centre and leopard house in the vicinity. A day spent at such places provides an insight into the ways of animal rescue and rehabilitation. Rasikbil, a paradise of winged beauties, can be reached by road from Cooch Behar and Alipurduar.

Gorumara National Park

Situated along the banks of the River Murti and Raidak, Gorumara National Park is one of the most popular attractions in Dooars. The area of the park, which is around 80 sq km, encompasses grasslands and forests. Since 1895 it was a reserve forest but years later, it was given the status of a wildlife sanctuary in 1949. Furthermore, in 1994, the park was declared a national park which is home to a diverse range of flora and fauna. It is specially known for being home to the great Indian rhinoceros. Other prominent animals that can be spotted here are elephant, leopard, hornbill, king cobra, Indian python and gaur, to name a few. Travellers can choose between elephant safari and jeep safari to explore the park. They can even climb atop the watchtowers (Methla, Chukchuki, Chandrachur and Jatraprasad) to spot the inhabitants of the park with the help of binoculars.

One of the most popular tourist destinations in Dooars, Gorumara National Park attracts a lot of tourists round the year. The park's green forests, tall elephant grasses, streams and beautiful landscape provide shelter to several mammals, reptiles, birds and amphibians. Gorumara National Park is also a birders' paradise. If you are a birder, you will have a great time spotting and photographing birds like hornbill, woodpecker, ibis, drongo, minivet, and pheasants. The ruddy shelduck, also known as the Brahminy duck, migrates to the park during winters. Beautiful butterflies can also be spotted in the jungle, along with night hunters like owls and nightjars.

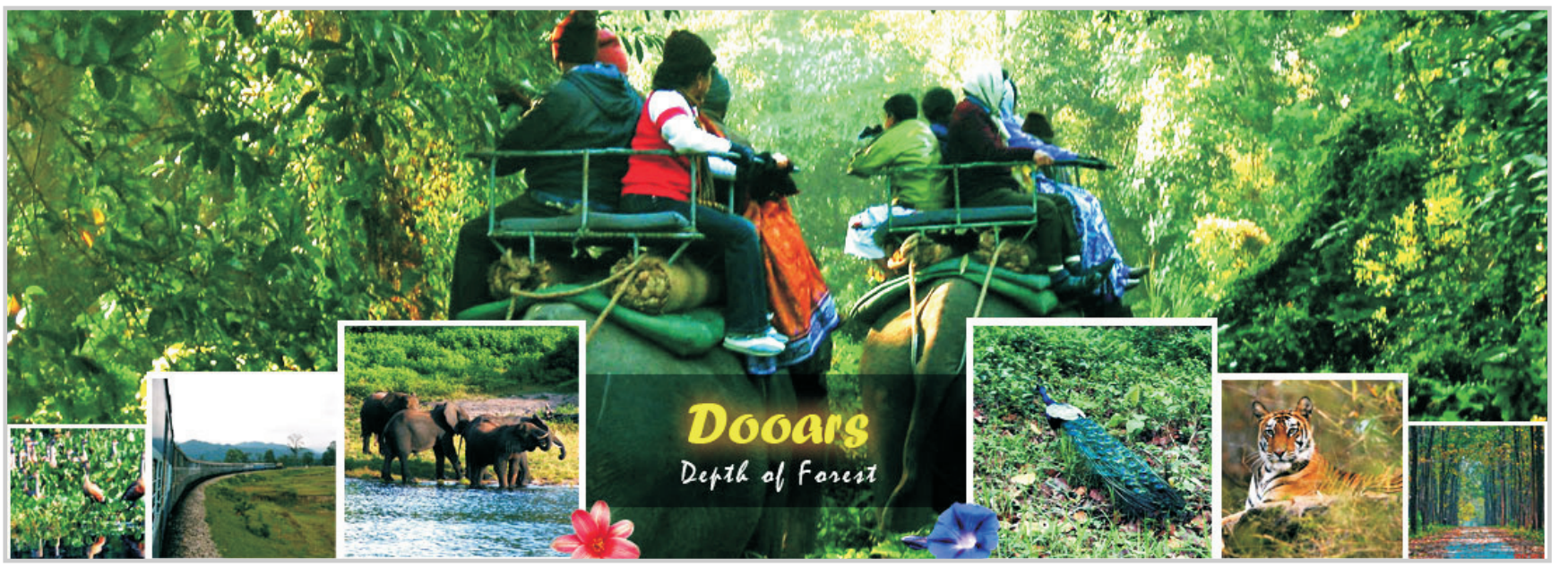
Preferably visit the park during winters as it is considered the best time for coming here. While you can choose from a number of forest rest houses at Gorumara for accommodation, Lataguri, the nearest town offers several accommodation facilities. The nearest railhead is New Jalpaiguri and the nearest airport is Bagdogra. Gorumara National Park can also be reached by road from Siliguri, which is around 72 km away.

Jaldapara National Park

Situated on the banks of the River Torsa, Jaldapara National Park is one of the popular places to visit in Dooars. Before 1800, when the place was inhabited by Toto and Mech tribes, it was known as Totopara. The sanctuary was established in 1941 with an aim to protect Asiatic one-horned rhinoceros, and was eventually declared a national park in the year 2012.

Spanning over an area of 216.5 sq km, the park boasts of verdant grassland with patches of riverine forest and belts of tall grass. At an altitude of 61 m in the foothills of Eastern Himalayas, this park is mainly savannah forest and is home to a rich variety of flora and fauna. Along with one-horned rhinoceros, various mammals, amphibians, reptiles and birds dwell here, such as elephant, leopard, Bengal florican, peacock, python, cobra and around eight species of fresh water turtles.

A fun way to witness the wilderness of Jaldapara National Park is by elephant safari. Another way to explore the flora and fauna of the region is to opt for jeep safari. For a close encounter, you can climb any of the many watchtowers in the park. There are various tourist lodges and guests houses available in the region for accommodation of tourists coming to visit Jaldapara National Park.



The best places for Skiing in India



With the increasing popularity of winter sports, there are plenty of destinations offering skiing in India, along with snow boarding and trekking. Come winter and the picturesque Himalayas turn into a white wonderland. Carpeted in layers of fresh snow, they have some of the highest ski slopes in the world. Equipped with good accommodation, training centres and instructors, these ski towns in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand Kashmir are ideal for an adventurous getaway. From the magnificent high-altitude snowy landscapes of Gulmarg to the more gentle slopes around Narkanda and Solang Valley, there are a range of options to choose from

Kufri

If you're visiting Kufri during the winter, it's the best time for a spot of skiing. For beginners, there are several gentle slopes to ease into things, while the pros can flaunt their skills down the slope from Mahasu. The government offers a number of ski courses ranging from a day to several days—ski equipment is available for hire as well—where experienced instructors teach you the ropes. A relatively new winter sport, tobogganing has recently gained popularity in Kufri, and is a favourite with tourists who want to enjoy sliding down the slopes without too much skill..

Solang Valley

Around 13 kilometres away from Manali, this pretty valley is a popular spot for adventure sports, especially skiing. Situated between Solang village and Beas Kund, it offers panoramic views of the surrounding snow-capped mountains and glaciers. In summer, it has facilities for paragliding, zorbing, mountain biking and horse riding. In winter, especially between January and March, it is used for skiing, snowboarding and sledging. It also hosts a winter skiing festival. The Directorate of Mountaineering & Allied Sports in Manali also organises basic, advance and intermediate level courses in skiing. For the less-adventurous, there are also plenty of walking trails all around.



Gulmarg

If you're looking for a destination which is as breathtakingly beautiful as it is adventurous, then look no further than Kashmir. The Kashmir valley is considered heaven on earth, and when it's blanketed in snow, it exudes a charm few other places do. The tiny and isolated hill village of Gulmarg is situated at the western extremity of the Himalayas in a subsidiary range called the Pir Panjals. Lying about 50 kilometres from Srinagar, it can be easily accessed by tourist buses, taxis and even by air. Owing to its location, Gulmarg gets some of the heaviest snowfalls in the Himalayas and has earned the distinction of being the best ski resort in the country. So once you've feasted your eyes on all the beauty, immerse yourself in some activity by hitting the slopes.

Catering to both beginners and pros, skiing here can be one of the most powerful experiences. For the more mild adventure enthusiasts, there's the option of sledging, cable-car rides and snow boarding. Ski season starts mid December and lasts till the beginning of April. As for accommodation, there are various options. From state-owned huts and cottages, and beautifully appointed mid-range hotels like Nedous Hotel, to luxury accommodation at Hotel Highlands Park, there's something to suit every budget.

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

Auli

A picturesque destination located in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand, Auli is another well-known skiing destination in the country. Visit during the months of January to March when temperatures plummet to -4 degrees, and ski enthusiasts gravitate to indulge in the winter sports. You can get a flight till Dehradun, which is the state capital and closest airport, and proceed by road which is well connected with frequent buses, hired jeeps and taxis. There are a good range of budget and deluxe hotels available for tourists to stay, so accommodation won't be a problem.

Not only is Auli a great place to partake in skiing, it's also a good option for beginners looking to learn the ropes.

Offering excellent snowy slopes and the very best skiing facilities, you can join one of the skiing courses where professional instructors teach you everything from the basics upwards. If you're not big on the sports, there's the option of some fabulous treks which take you through hot springs, ancient temples, untarnished nature and some magnificent views of the taller Himalayan peaks. For your stay, choose between budget options such as the state-run GMVN guesthouses or book yourself a luxurious stay at the Cliff Top Club hotel.

Narkanda

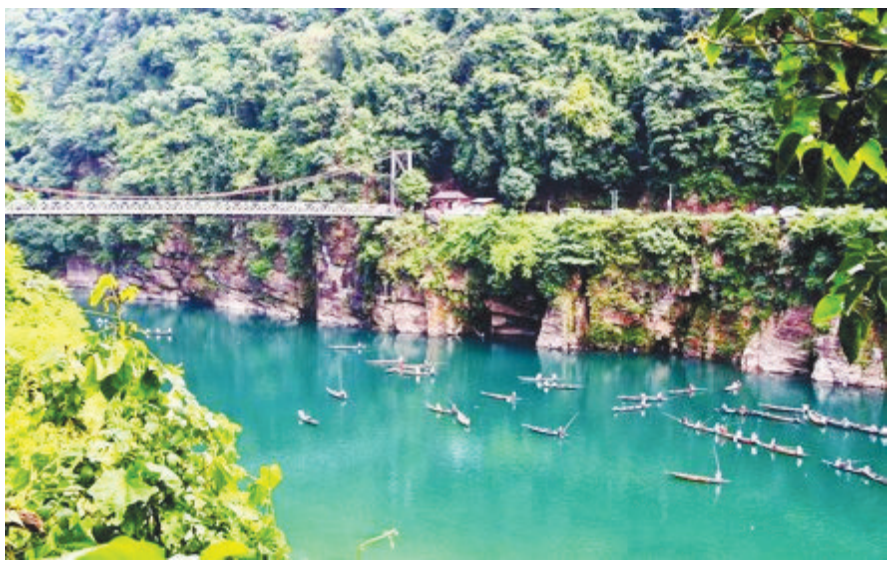
Perched at a height of 2708 m on NH-22, Narkanda is famous for its apple orchards as well as its skiing. The best season for skiing is between January and mid-March, when Narkanda is carpeted with thick snowfall. Situated only 65 km from Shimla, it is a quick and convenient winter getaway from Delhi and a popular skiing hotspot.

The slopes around the hill station offer beautiful views of snow-covered forests and mountains. The main skiing area is in Dhumri, whose gentle slopes are ideal for beginners. Most hotels run by HPTDC along with the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports offers courses in skiing with qualified instructors, along with rental equipment.



Things to do in Shillong

The abode of clouds



The city of Shillong is often considered to be a place where nature is in its primal beauty; where clouds and the sun express their own camaraderie through a vivid interlay of sunshine and shadow; where the colonial remnants meet the upsurge of modern day influence and where music runs through the veins of everyone you come across. So naturally, there is a lot to see in Shillong, which is, by the way, true to the core; but to tag the city as merely a 'places to visit paradise' would be sheer injustice to the lesser known opportunities for action and adventure. Things to do in Shillong can be turned into a full-fledged vacation idea rather than just a part of the itinerary.

Embark on a musical journey in the city often referred to as India's Rock Capital and a watchful stroll along the narrow alleys is a good start to have. Extend your sojourn and see names like Lou Majaw, Afflatus and Soulmate in their own territory. For the ones who like things ready-on-a-platter, we suggest you visit Shillong during any music concert. Once your thirst for melody is quenched, time for some water rappelling at the Elephant Falls; golfer or non golfer, Shillong Golf Course is one place you would not want to miss out on; take a leisurely stroll along the Wards Lake and indulge in water activities like boating, skiing and rowing at the Umiam Lake.

Take a stroll around Wards Lake

Located in the midst of the colonial era Shillong, Wards Lake is a popular hangout place for the tourists and locals alike. Unlike the Umiam Lake, this one is more planned and all the facilities have been provided keeping in mind requirements of the leisure traveller. The entire area is adorned with flower beds, beautiful trees, lovely high lands and a bridge. Seekers of tranquility will have their share of personal space amid a growing city; nature lovers can admire the man-made corner for the greens and photography enthusiasts will not mind spending some time in Wards Lake. Extend your walk towards the northeast direction of the lake and after about 15 minutes you will arrive at the Shillong Golf Course which with all its greenery and pine trees!

Boating at Umiam Lake

Located in the midst of the colonial era Shillong, Wards Lake is a popular hangout place for the tourists and locals alike. Unlike the Umiam Lake, this one is more planned and all the facilities have been provided keeping in mind requirements of the leisure traveller. The entire area is adorned with flower beds, beautiful trees, lovely high lands and a bridge. Seekers of tranquility will have their share of personal space amid a growing city; nature lovers can admire the man-made corner for the greens and photography enthusiasts will not mind spending some time in Wards Lake. Extend your walk towards the northeast direction of the lake and after about 15 minutes you will arrive at the Shillong Golf Course which with all its greenery and pine trees!

Golfing in Shillong Golf Course

Courtesy its past as the British capital of the then undivided Assam, Shillong has the imprints of the days bygone; Shillong Golf Course is one of them. But it will be sheer injustice to the magnanimous entity if we box it up only as a colonial remnant and a place for the professional players to test their skills. The 18-hole course is a green paradise with grass spread across like carpet with trees standing like watchful protectors. The lush green hills that form the backdrop of beautiful pine and rhododendron trees add to the splendor of the landscape. Be a part of the golf tournaments that are held on this venue to be one with the surroundings and its legacy.



Musical sojourn

Shillong is the unofficial but undisputed rock capital of India with a legacy of musical heritage that runs through the veins of every Shillong dweller. Music is in the air of this beautiful city and get ready to bump into at least one good musician with his instrument hanging on the shoulder in any corner of Shillong. The influence of metal and rock sound is prominent in Shillong music scene but let's not undermine the rich local musical flavours that are equally rich in tone and texture. Shillong is home to India's first and most prominent all-female band Afflatus and the famous Lou Majaw. Few of the bars and pubs are known for their live band performances with famous local bands like Soulmate and Prisoners of Chaos weaving their magic. And if you have had enough of indoor performances, maybe you should visit Shillong during a music concert. Indian and international musicians gather in those concerts and cast a spell of melody on the audience leaving them wanting for more.

Waterfall rappelling at Elephant Falls

Elephant Falls is the combination of three small torrents that form a strong stream that adorns the fern-covered rocks. The place got its name in the colonial era when the Englishmen spotted a giant rock resembling an elephant near the fall. The rock got destroyed during an earth quake and the Englishmen left the country but the name stayed. Due to its origin in three streams, the water force of Elephant Falls is one to reckon with which offers ample opportunities for adventure sports like waterfall rappelling. For starters, you can try rappelling from the height of 40 ft and don't worry; you will be well harnessed under expert surveillance. Climb down from your starting point and feel the immense water pressure on you while you struggle to find your footing in the slippery rocks.

Delhi teen rents Audi through app for birthday party, kills pedestrian in crash



New Delhi. (Agency)
While returning home from a friend's birthday, a 17-year-old teen, driving a rented Audi, allegedly hit a pedestrian, leading to his death in Southwest Delhi late Sunday. Police said the teen has been apprehended. Police identified the victim was Umashankar, aged around 45. The

The 17-year-old rented an Audi through an app for the night to go to a friend's birthday party. While returning home, the teen allegedly lost control of the vehicle and hit two parked cars on the roadside, before ramming into the pedestrian," said an officer.

incident took place at Kishangarh around 2.30 am. "On Sunday, the 17-year-old rented an Audi through an app for the night to go to a friend's birthday party. While returning home, the teen allegedly lost control of the vehicle and hit two parked cars on the roadside, before ramming into the pedestrian," said an officer.
"Umashankar was shifted to JPN Apex Trauma Centre, where he was declared brought dead," the officer added. Police said they have seized the Audi. An FIR under sections of causing death by negligence and rash driving of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, as well as provisions of the Motor Vehicle Act has been registered at Kishangarh police station, police said.

DPCC: Yamuna water quality deteriorated at 3 locations in September

The Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) levels remained high and well beyond the permissible limit for September.

New Delhi. (Agency)
The Yamuna river, which enters the city at Palla Village and exits at Jaitpur, recorded a slight deterioration in the water quality at three spots in September, with faecal coliform levels declining sharply from the previous month, according to the data from the DPCC. The Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) levels remained high and well beyond the permissible limit for September.
The water quality testing by DPCC involves collecting water samples from seven locations along the course of the Yamuna river through the capital, measuring several parameters such as BOD, dissolved oxygen, chemical oxygen demand, pH and faecal coliform, to determine the pollution level.



The seven locations include major points like Palla, Wazirabad, ISBT Bridge, ITO Bridge, Nizamudin Bridge, Okhla Barrage and the Yamuna River at Asgarpur (Kidwali, Haryana). Three of the locations showed further deterioration, two locations showed slight improvement, while two more locations showed no change from the August data.
The three locations which showed deterioration were Wazirabad, Nizamudin Bridge, and at Asgarpur.
Two locations where the level remained the same were ISBT and ITO Bridge. The highest BOD was recorded at ISBT Bridge at 30 mg/l. The highest BOD in August was also recorded at ISBT Bridge, with a level of 28 mg/l.

Delhi government to survey over 680 properties allotted to Partition-era evacuee

A report will be submitted to the Centre which will decide on fate of these holdings

New Delhi. (Agency)
The Delhi government is set to begin a survey of more than 680 built-up properties in the Capital that were handed to families arriving from Pakistan after the India-Pakistan Partition in 1947, with the findings to be submitted to the Centre for a decision on the future of these holdings, The Indian Express has learnt. The exercise follows directions from the Centre and will be carried out on the basis of a list prepared by the Land and Building department's evacuee property cell of the Delhi government.
The list of built-up evacuee properties in different municipal wards of Delhi runs to 683 numbered entries and identifies, property by property, the municipal ward number, the property number, the name of the occupant and the locality. Each entry is to be verified on the ground, an official said. The official also said the survey will record the condition of the property, who currently resides in it, whether it has been sold, rebuilt, or is illegally occupied.
The properties fall in some of the oldest and most densely built parts of the walled city and its extensions. The areas named include Kashmere Gate, Chandni Chowk, Mori Gate, Balli Maran, Frash Khana, Turkman Gate, Pahari Dhiraj, Chitli Qabar, Pahari Bhojla, Lal Kuan, Jama Masjid, Churiwalan, Darya Ganj, Nizamuddin, Roshanara Road, Kamla Nagar, Malka Ganj, Sadar Bazar, Karol Bagh, Nabi Karim, Paharganj, Multani Dhanda, Sarai Rohilla and Basti Punjaban.
The list also extends beyond the municipal wards to two properties at Dr Lane in Gole Market, and one at Jantar Mantar Road in New Delhi district. "After the Partition, a large number of people left Delhi for Pakistan, while families arriving from the other side settled in the city. Close to 680 families who migrated from Delhi are understood to have left their houses behind, and the then Centre had allotted those vacant houses to families that had come from Pakistan," an official said.Officials said these families were given possession but not ownership



rights creating a critical legal gap that the survey now seeks to establish the consequences of, decades on. "Thousands of people who crossed over at the time were also allotted plots. Many of those families have since built houses on them and continue to live there, while several others have sold the plots," the official said. "The survey is expected to capture both categories. Where a property has changed hands, been subdivided or rebuilt, the record on the ground is likely to diverge sharply from the one in the file," the official added. Officials also said that the findings will be compiled and sent to the Centre, which will then take a view on the status of the properties. "The survey is being positioned as a status check rather than an eviction exercise, with the immediate purpose being to establish a current record of the 1947 allotments," the official said.

Portal to be launched, sub-committee formed to monitor, regulate PGs in Delhi

Key decisions made during the meeting also included creation of a centralised web portal to capture "student location and accommodation data".

New Delhi. (Agency)
To examine any relaxation in setting up authorised paying guest (PG) facilities in group housing societies and student hubs, the Delhi government has set up a sub-committee. The decision was taken during a meeting of a high-powered committee chaired by Delhi Education Minister Ashish Sood on Thursday that was formed after a five-storey building collapsed at Satya Niketan, killing seven people, including five Delhi University students, on September 6. Key decisions made during the meeting also included creation of a centralised web portal to capture "student location and accommodation data". "The portal will remain simple during its initial rollout to collect essential details such as room counts and basic amenities without causing panic among operators," officials said on Thursday. Initial tests and a dry run are expected to be completed in four days, followed by an official government campaign for student registration. The sub-committee has been set up to examine possible relaxations in the Master Plan for Delhi (MPD)-2047 and the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957. "The focus is to explore whether relaxations can be granted within a 5-6 km radius of major educational hubs as well as in group housing societies and RWA areas to enable legal, safe PG operations," an official statement by Sood's office read. The sub-committee would be constituted by officials from the Delhi



Development Authority (DDA), the Delhi government, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and DU Vice-Chancellor, officials said. Major student hubs like Satya Niketan, Mukherjee Nagar, and Ber Sarai face an acute shortage of official university hostels. Urban planners earlier told this newspaper that thousands of students rely on private accommodations in residential areas, as existing framework makes legal operations difficult with land-use rules among others limiting commercialised or multi-tenant boarding activities in residential zones, making way for PG accommodations to mushroom informally or illegally. "…we will soon bring PG regulations and laws to streamline this system," said Sood.
"We will be launching the portal very soon so that it is known where children are living, enabling us to regulate the facilities. Where issues are arising in legal operations due to restrictions in the Master Plan and DMC Act, the sub-committee will sit to study that … We are committed to providing safe and affordable housing, and we are working rapidly toward it," Sood added. The regulatory draft for the proposed Paying Guest Accommodation Regulation and Safety Bill, 2026 would be finalised in two weeks time, with the high-powered panel set to reconvene after October 20, officials said. Thursday's meeting also saw recommendations on enhanced CCTV surveillance at PGs.

Delhi Traffic Police issues 13.35 lakh challans for unauthorised parking, L-G calls for joint action

New Delhi. (Agency)
Delhi Traffic Police has so far issued over 1 lakh challans and 5.54 lakh notices for unauthorised parking, with Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Thursday directing agencies to intensify action through joint enforcement to check illegal parking. Chairing a meet to review chronic parking issues, the LG directed officials to explore if adoption of FASTag and app-based real-time slot tracking along with automated sensor ticketing, could be mandated to lessen manual intervention.



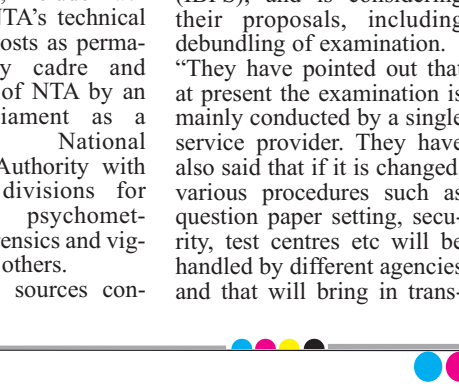
Taranjit Singh Sandhu directed agencies to intensify enforcement from October 15 to December 15 and explore FASTag, real-time parking slot tracking and automated ticketing to curb illegal parking.

The MCD presented a district-wise enforcement plan with the Traffic Police for parking hotspots and market corridors from October 1 to December 15. Till October 5, the Traffic Police had issued 13.35 lakh challans and 5.5 lakh notices for unauthorised parking and towed 1.25 lakh vehicles using 76 cranes. Officials from the Traffic Police, MCD, NDMC and DMRC reviewed the persistent parking and mobility challenges at the meeting. Sandhu directed officials to examine the possibility of providing dedicated EV charging points at all proposed parking sites. The proposed integration of all MCD and NDMC managed parking on the Park+ app, with live display of vacant and occupied slots and data sharing with Google Maps and MapmyIndia was also discussed.

Delhi building collapse: Woman dies trying to save others, three-year-old survivor searches for mother

Hazra Bibi, 56, was trapped under the debris while attempting to rescue people as the four-storey building collapsed in Seemapuri; her body was recovered on Thursday

New Delhi. (Agency)
"Had she not thought about others, she could have survived," said family members of Hazra Bibi (56), one of the victims who lost her life in the building collapse on Wednesday in northeast Delhi's Seemapuri. According to the family, Hazra had rushed to her relative Anwar's house after hearing that his daughter, Nusrat, had come to visit.



Instead of running to safety, Hazra reportedly ran towards those who were present there. In the attempt to save them, she herself got trapped under the heavy debris. Her body was recovered during the rescue operation on Thursday. The building was around 30 year old and its owner, Anwar is currently missing. Anwar's father-in-law, Salim Ahmed, said Hazra, who lived nearby, had come to Anwar's house on Wednesday afternoon after learning that his daughter, Nusrat, was visiting her parental home. At that time, some people were present near the house.
"As the building suddenly collapsed, Hazra, instead of trying to save herself, rushed forward to save people present there. While attempting to save them, she accidently ran in different directions and got trapped under the debris. Her body was later recovered on Thursday," he said. Amid these painful accounts, the story of three-year-old Ayaan is equally heartbreaking. He survived the collapse with minor injuries, but since being discharged from hospital, he has been desperately looking for his mother, Nusrat, who was killed in the tragedy.
According to Wasim Ahmed, a local resident, there was a chaos when the incident took place.

58 meetings in 2 months: Inside Nilekani panel's push to reform exams

Over 50,000 suggestions received from various stakeholders, say officials; final report to be submitted by month-end

New Delhi. (Agency)
The Nandan Nilekani-led High Powered Task Force (HPTF) on examination reforms has held about 18 meetings at the panel level along with 40 consultative meetings since its constitution on July 26, a day after the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Officials said that the panel has received over 50,000 suggestions. In an affidavit submitted to the Supreme Court earlier this week on progress made by the task force, the government has said that "suggestions received from the United Doctors Front (UDF) were duly considered by the HPTF in the course of its deliberations". The UDF suggestions, given by advocate Charu Mathur, include having 75% of NTA's technical and security posts as permanent statutory cadre and reconstitution of NTA by an Act of Parliament as a Statutory National Examination Authority with independent divisions for cybersecurity, psychometrics, digital forensics and vigilance, among others.
Besides UDF, sources confirmed that the committee has received suggestions from various sectors, including students, parents, student bodies, doctors' associations and examination conducting bodies like National Recruitment Agency (NRA), Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Railway Recruitment Board (RRB) and Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS), and is considering their proposals, including debundling of examination.
"They have pointed out that at present the examination is mainly conducted by a single service provider. They have also said that if it is changed, various procedures such as question paper setting, security, test centres etc will be handled by different agencies and that will bring in transparency," said an official.



The official said currently vendors have exam centres on lease. "Now, as the government is planning to shift from the pen and paper mode to Computer-Based Test (CBT) for NEET from next year, there is a need to strengthen the infrastructure also… so that the government has dedicated centres with proper security, IT infrastructure and facilities from city to regional and rural level. We have received a large number of suggestions, which are being reviewed…," said the official. The constitution of the high-powered six-member committee was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi a day after Pradhan's resignation following massive student protests at Jantar Mantar on July 25. On September 18, the Supreme Court directed the Joint Secretary of the Department of Personnel and Training, coordinating with the Task Force, to place on record within two weeks an affidavit indicating the progress made by the committee. In the affidavit, Joint Secretary, Dr. Polamuri Bala Kiran said: "It is submitted that …since its constitution, the Task Force has held about 18 meetings, deliberate on various provisions and aspects of examination reforms."
In addition, HPTF members have conducted more than "40 consultative meetings with various ministries/departments, including the Department of Higher Education, Department of School Education & Literacy and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; examination and recruitment organisations, technology providers, vendors and eminent experts and other stakeholders having relevant domain expertise.

TCS adds 4,458 employees in Q2, on boards 10,000 freshers

New Delhi. (Agency)
Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) added 4,258 employees on a net basis in the September quarter, taking its total workforce to 598,056. This is the third quarter in a row in which TCS has increased its headcount.
The company added around 9,279 employees in Q1, taking its net hiring for the first half of FY27 to 13,537.
The IT company's 12-month trailing attrition rate also improved, falling to 13.3% from 13.6% in the previous quarter."We continue to build a future-ready workforce through upskilling our employees and hiring top talent. Investments in learning and critical skills drove a 17% sequential increase in learning hours



to 17.1 million. This quarter, our employee base reached over 598,000, while attrition remained stable at 13.3%," chief HR officer Sudeep Kunnumal said.For fresher hiring, TCS made 25,000 offers at the start of FY27. By the end of Q1, around 14,000 freshers had joined the company, and in Q2 the company said 10,000 more had joined. Kunnumal said the company is now in the last leg of the campus hiring process for FY27. TCS also increased its use of subcontractors in the quarter to meet demand and address supply-demand mismatches. Chief financial officer Sameer Saxena said the increase was seen "across India as well as overseas", and was not entirely linked to higher visa costs.

Delhi Metro to restrict entry, exit at 57 stations from 9 pm Check details



New Delhi. (Agency)
Delhi Metro entry and exit gates at 57 stations may be closed from 9 pm on October 9 until the situation "normalises" on October 10, in view of proposed protests and the likelihood of unruly crowd movement, according to an official communication posted by ANI.The Delhi Police has proposed closing entry and exit gates at these stations and reducing train frequency in the affected areas ahead of protests scheduled for October 10. The communication was sent by the Delhi Metro Police to the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC).The proposed restrictions are aimed at managing crowd movement and maintaining law and order amid concerns over possible unruly gatherings, the letter dated October 8 said.

Railways cancels all Delhi-bound mail, express trains reaching NDLS, NZM

New Delhi. (Agency) Indian Railways has cancelled all mail and express trains scheduled to reach New Delhi Railway Station (NDLS) and Hazrat Nizamuddin (NZM) between 4 am and 2 pm on October 10, citing the possibility of severe road traffic congestion around the two stations.
According to a railway order issued on October 9, the cancellations apply to mail and express trains departing from their originating stations after 2 pm on Friday and scheduled to arrive at either of the two Delhi stations during the specified window. The affected services will be cancelled at their source stations.The decision comes amid planned protests in the national capital against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, with demonstrations expected at Jantar Mantar.

Sensex, Nifty open higher after sharp sell-off; IT stocks lead gains, TCS jumps 3%

The BSE Sensex rose 449.84 points, or 0.63%, to 72,043.08 at 9:32 am. The Nifty 50 gained 150.95 points, or 0.68%, to 22,382.75 at 9:33 am. It opened at 22,314.95 and hit an early high of 22,388.70.

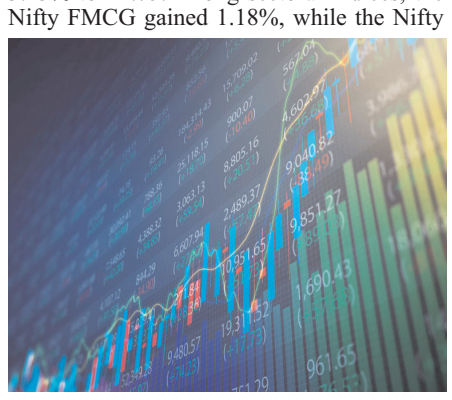
New Delhi. (Agency)
Stock markets opened higher on Friday, October 9, as the Sensex and Nifty staged a rebound after a sharp sell-off in the previous session. IT stocks led the recovery, supported by gains in Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) following its September-quarter results.The BSE Sensex rose 449.84 points, or 0.63%, to 72,043.08 at 9:32 am. The index opened at 71,776.67 and touched an early high of 72,060.51.The Nifty 50 gained 150.95 points, or 0.68%, to 22,382.75 at 9:33 am. It opened at 22,314.95 and hit an early high of 22,388.70.The rebound followed Thursday's sharp decline, when the Sensex plunged 1,045 points, or 1.44%, to close at 71,593.24, while the Nifty fell 371 points, or 1.64%, to settle at 22,231.80. Both benchmarks came under pressure amid concerns over rising crude oil prices, foreign investor outflows and the Reserve Bank of India's tighter monetary policy stance.

IT STOCKS LEAD GAINS

The Nifty IT index rose 2.27% in early trade, emerging as the best-performing sectoral index among those shown in the market data. TCS shares were in focus after the company reported its September-quarter results on Thursday and issued a statement saying the US suspension of the green-card programme was not expected to affect its workforce strategy or customer engagements.
The company said its applications under the US Permanent Labour Certification (PERM) programme had been in single digits over the past two years. It also reiterated its plan to hire an additional 15,000 people in the US over the next five years.
Investors are assessing the results alongside the potential implications of the US government's action against several major technology companies. The Nifty IT index's early gains suggest a positive response to the sector, although the sustainability of the recovery will depend on broader market sentiment and the outlook for technology spending.

BROADER MARKETS ALSO RECOVER

The broader market indices traded largely higher in early deals. The Nifty 100 and Nifty 200 rose 0.52% each, while the Nifty 500 gained 0.42%. The Nifty Midcap 50 advanced 0.46%, and the Nifty Midcap 100 rose 0.54%.However, the Nifty Smallcap 100 slipped 0.35%, indicating that the recovery was not uniform across market segments. India VIX, the market's volatility gauge, fell 3.43% to 14.75.Among sectoral indices, the Nifty FMCG gained 1.18%, while the Nifty



PSU Bank rose 1.13%. The Nifty Financial Services 25/50 advanced 0.83%, and the Nifty Private Bank index climbed 0.89%. The Nifty Financial Services Ex-Bank and Nifty MidSmall Financial Services indices rose 0.68% and 0.69%, respectively.The Nifty MidSmall IT and Telecom index gained 1.41%, while the Nifty Media rose 0.71% and the Nifty Metal advanced 0.56%. The Nifty Auto, Realty, Healthcare, Consumer Durables and Chemicals indices also traded higher.Pharma and Oil and Gas were among the sectors in the red, declining 0.35% and 0.32%, respectively.

CRUDE OIL, FII SELLING REMAIN KEY RISKS

Despite the early recovery, elevated crude oil prices and foreign institutional investor (FII) selling remain important risks for the market. Brent crude was trading at $102.91 per barrel, down 1.31%, while US West Texas Intermediate crude fell 1.14% to $90.45, according to the market data provided. The decline offered some relief after the recent surge in oil prices, although both benchmarks remained elevated.Dr V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments Limited, said high crude prices and elevated US bond yields continued to weigh on Indian equities.

Deal street grosses up $110.3 billion in first 9 months of 2026

The market also benefited from consolidation across infrastructure, financial services and healthcare and strengthening outbound deals, which reached its highest first-nine-month total since 2010, said Elaine Tan, senior manager at LSEG Deals Intelligence

New Delhi. (Agency)
Despite a marginal dip in volume, the deal street grossed up a whopping $110.3 billion during the first nine months of 2026, which though is only a 1.7% higher than the year-ago number, is the highest since 2022.It highlights a market that is increasingly driven by fewer but larger strategic transactions. The biggest deal was led by Vedanta's five-way demerger, which included the $20.6 billion Vedanta Aluminium spin-off, according to LSEG Deals Intelligence.The market also benefited from consolidation across infrastructure, financial services and healthcare and strengthening outbound deals, which reached its highest first-nine-month total since 2010, said Elaine Tan, senior manager at LSEG Deals Intelligence.

Outbound deals, led Sun Pharma's proposed $11.4 billion acquisition of Organon and Bharti Airtel's acquisition of Airtel Africa, were the leaders.

Target India M&As totaled $88.4 billion, down 2.8% from



the same period last year while domestic M&As grew 2.8% to US$64.9 billion. Inbound M&As reached $23.5 billion, down 15.4% while outbound M&As amounted to $21.0 billion, a 24.1% increase in value, marking the highest since 2010.Sector-wise, materials led deal activity, totaling $25.4 billion, more than a four-times increase from the first nine months of last year, and accounting for 23% market share. Healthcare followed with $16.7 billion, up 59.1%, capturing 15.2% share and industrials totaled $15.2 billion, down 9.5% from last year, representing 13.7% market share.

The biggest of the $110-billion chunk was the equity capital market that raised $40.3 billion during the reporting period, demonstrating continued depth despite a more selective issuance environment. Equity raising accelerated significantly in the third quarter, driven by a number of landmark transactions, most notably the NSE issue, which helped lift IPO proceeds to one of the strongest year-to-date totals on record. Follow-on issuance accounted for more than two-thirds of total market proceeds, including the government's stake sale in LIC. Financials, industrials, healthcare and materials led fundraising activity as companies continued to access public markets to support expansion plans, infrastructure investment, and manufacturing growth, Tan said.

Meanwhile, investment banking activities generated an estimated $1.1 billion in fees during the first nine months of 2026, up 1.8% on-year, the highest since records began in 2000.ECM underwriting fees fell 9% on-year to $415.6 million, while DCM underwriting fees declined 12% to $181.5 million and syndicated lending fees grew 8% on-year, generating $150.6 million and completed M&A advisory fees grew 26% on-year to $347.4 million.Equity capital markets fundraising fell to a three-year low, raising $40.8 billion in the first nine months of 2026, a 1.7% decline and the number of offerings also fell 13.5%.Of the total, initial public offerings (IPOs) raised $12.5 billion, an 11.3% increase on-year, the highest first nine-month total since records began in 1980, despite a 17.9% decline in number of IPOs.

Rupee rises 23 paise to 96.65 against US dollar in early trade

MUMBAI. (Agency)
The rupee appreciated 23 paise to 96.65 against US dollar in early trade on Friday, supported by a slight softening in the US dollar and suspected intervention by the Reserve Bank of India.Forex traders said the rupee opened on a positive note this morning with the dollar index down to 102 levels and Brent also down to USD 103.39 per barrel after US President Donald Trump said that the attack on Iran will happen only after the midterm elections.
However, broader geopolitical pressures on the domestic currency persist and relentless foreign fund outflows is pressurising the domestic



unit further, they said.
At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 96.74, then gained some ground to touch 96.65, registering a rise of 23 paise over its previous close.On Thursday, the rupee depreciated by 13 paise to close at 96.88 against the US dollar.Sustained strength in the US Dollar Index (DXY trading near multi-month highs near to 102.50), Brent crude prices firming back above USD 104 per barrel, and relentless foreign portfolio outflows from domestic equities kept dollar demand elevated among oil marketing companies and importers," said Anil Kumar Bhansali Head of Treasury and Executive Director Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP.Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading marginally lower by 0.10 per cent at 102.03.Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading lower by 1.09 per cent at USD 103.14 per barrel in futures trade.On the domestic equity market front, Sensex climbed 292 points to 71,876.10, while the Nifty was trading up 84.60 points to 22,310.40.
Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 12,943.58 crore on a net basis on Thursday, according to exchange data.

No MDR-related discussion in GST Council; states flag concerns



New Delhi. (Agency)
Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman during the 57th meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council,There was no discussion on the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) at the 57th GST Council meeting held on Thursday, the

A state finance minister said some states were opposed to imposing GST on MDR on UPI transactions and wanted the rate reduced from the current 18% to 5%

Finance Ministry confirmed. However, sources said some states flagged concerns over the 18% GST levied on MDR, particularly on UPI transactions."There was no MDR-related discussion in the GST Council meeting today," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said at a press briefing following the meeting.A state finance minister said some states were opposed to imposing GST on MDR on UPI transactions and wanted the rate reduced from the current 18% to 5%.The GST rate on MDR remains unchanged at 18%, as the Council kept tax rates largely unchanged and focused on compliance and ITC-related reforms.

EPFTDS exemption gets a new form: What changes from tax year 2026-27

If you are planning to withdraw your EPF money, there is a tax-related change you should know about. The new rules for claiming TDS exemption will take effect from tax year 2026-27.

New Delhi. (Agency)
Five trekkers, who went missing in the higher reaches of the Dhauladhar Range in Himachal Pradesh, werfforts to trace them," Sankalp Gautam, SDM, Baijnath, said earlier on Thursday.In a post on social media platform X, EPFO said that Form 121 must be submitted to claim TDS exemption from tax year 2026-27.

The change means EPF members who were previously using Form 15G or Form 15H for this purpose will need to familiarise themselves with the new declaration form.

WHAT IS FORM 121, AND HOW DOES IT HELP?

Form 121 is a declaration prescribed under the Income Tax Rules, 2026. According to the Income Tax Department's portal, taxpayers use it to declare that the tax payable on their estimated total income for the relevant tax year is nil.Once the declaration is submitted, the payer, also known as the deductor, may be permitted to make specified payments without deducting TDS, provided the taxpayer meets the applicable conditions.For EPF members, Form 121 can be used to seek exemption from TDS on eligible withdrawals. However, submitting the form does not automatically guarantee an exemption. Members must meet the relevant eligibility requirements before making the declaration.

AT SHOULD EPF MEMBERS DO NOW?

EPF members planning to withdraw their savings should check whether they have completed five years of continuous service, whether the withdrawal exceeds Rs 50,000 and whether their estimated total income makes them eligible to submit Form 121.



WHEN IS TDS DEDUCTED ON EPF WITHDRAWALS?

Under Section 192A of the Income Tax Act, 2025, TDS may be deducted when an employee withdraws money from their EPF before completing five years of continuous service.The five-year service requirement is important when determining whether a withdrawal attracts TDS. Employees planning to withdraw their EPF savings should check their total service period and the amount they intend to withdraw before submitting a declaration to avoid tax deduction.

Karnataka's tiger count nears 700, up from 563

BENGALURU. (Agency)
Karnataka's tiger numbers are likely to show a spike in the yet-to-be released All India Tiger Estimation Report. "Our assessment shows there are around 700 tigers in the state, up from the 2022 estimation report of 563. The population is not just increasing inside protected areas like tiger reserves and wildlife sanctuaries, but also in territorial divisions and outside forest areas," said Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Wildlife, Kumar Pushkar.
While this is an indication of good conservation efforts, it comes with the challenge of increasing conflict. There is thus a need to come up with stringent mitigation methods, he said, speaking at the day-long Bengaluru conclave, as part of the 72nd Wildlife Week celebrations that started on October 2. He was speaking on the topic 'Karnataka's Conservation Legacy: Protected Areas, Wildlife Landscapes and Next Decade'.
The all-India tiger population is also on the rise. Forest officials said along with Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand are also showing a promising rise in numbers. As per the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Karnataka ranked second after Madhya Pradesh in the 2022 estimation report. "The estimation exercise started in November 2025 and was completed in May 2026.

Four held for duping Bengaluru university of Rs 1.4cr

BENGALURU. (Agency)
The Karnataka Cyber Command has arrested four persons in connection with a fraud known as the 'Boss Scam', in which fraudsters impersonated the president of a deemed-to-be university and tricked an accountant into transferring Rs 1.40 crore from the institution's bank account. The arrested are Annayya (25), a resident of KR Puram in Bengaluru; Buspalli Ravikumar Reddy (26) from Ananthapura in Andhra Pradesh; Ambaraya (39) from Afzalpura in Kalaburagi and Syed Wajihuddin Quadri (25) from Khairatabad in Hyderabad.
Police said, Santosh AS, an employee of the university, approached the South Division Cyber Police on September 9 and filed a complaint stating that an unidentified person had created a fake WhatsApp profile using the photograph of university president Dr Chenraj Roychand. On September 8, the fraudster, posing as the president, contacted the university's accountant, Vinay Bhushan, through WhatsApp and initially enquired about the balance in the institution's bank account. Later, the fraudster instructed the accountant to transfer Rs 1.40 crore, following which the amount was transferred from the university's account.
The police said the investigation revealed that the accused had first sent a ZIP file to the institution's staff. After the file was opened, they allegedly gained access to the system through the Chrome browser and logged into WhatsApp Web. They downloaded institutional data without the staff's knowledge and monitored the university's financial transactions for 15 to 20 days. Using the information gathered, the accused allegedly impersonated the university president and communicated with the accountant before directing him to transfer the funds to accounts controlled by them.

Missing from Maharashtra's draft voter roll? What to do by October 12

Polling stations hold special camps this weekend, and BLOs are going door to door. Here's who can apply, where to apply, and what to do if you've received a verification notice.

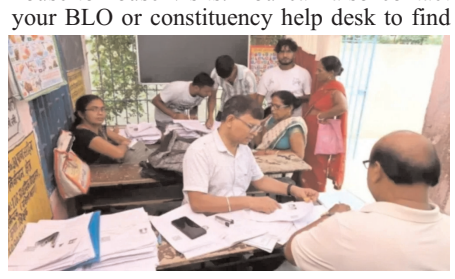
Mumbai. (Agency)
Maharashtra's draft electoral roll, published on August 31 under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), left out 2.07 crore of the 9.78 crore electors on the pre-revision roll because their enumeration forms could not be collected. If your name is among them, you have until October 12 to apply. This is not a final deletion count: eligible voters can still seek inclusion before the deadline.

Why are names missing?

The break up of those uncollectable voters showed 34.81 lakh marked dead, 75.52 lakh absent or not found and 76.80 lakh permanently shifted during the house-to-house exercise. Some of them are still eligible to vote. The state has now begun a campaign to find them.
Another 17.63 lakh electors were categorised as already enrolled elsewhere or duplicate entries, while 2.23 lakh fell under "others". These classifications do not automatically mean that an elector is ineligible to vote or will be excluded from the final roll.
The CEO's website has a facility to search for names in the draft roll using personal details, as well as an ASDD list of electors categorised as absent, shifted, dead or duplicate. Voters can also consult the Assembly constituency-wise SIR help desks or call helpline 1950. Voters can check the official ASDD list — covering electors marked Absent/Not Found, Shifted, Dead or Duplicate — on the "Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Maharashtra website" (https://ceoelection.maharashtra.gov.in/ceo/). The website also provides SIR instructions and Assembly constituency-wise help-desk details along with BLOs contact details.

What is the campaign?

Booth Level Officers (BLOs) are visiting homes to identify eligible voters who don't figure in the draft roll. After checking eligibility, they collect Form 6, the form used to seek inclusion in the electoral roll, the Chief Electoral Officer's (CEO) office said in a press note. According to official data on October 6, the election authorities received 6,24,054 applications between August 31 and October 4. These included 6,05,097 Form 6 applications, 11,251 Form 7 applications and 7,706 Form 8 applications. Form 6 is used to seek inclusion in the electoral roll, Form 7 to object to an entry or seek deletion of a name, and Form 8 to correct or modify an existing entry, including a change of address.
These camps are intended to help eligible voters who could not be contacted during the house-to-house visits. You can also contact your BLO or constituency help desk to find



out how to submit your application. Do not wait for another home visit if your name is missing and the deadline is approaching.
I've moved house. Can I still apply?
Yes, provided you are eligible to vote. The form you need depends on whether your name is already on the electoral roll. If your name is missing from the draft roll, contact your BLO or election help desk about seeking inclusion through Form 6. If your name is already on the roll but you have shifted residence, use Form 8 to update your address. Form 8 can also be used to correct details in an existing entry.
The CEO's office has published a list of electors categorised as absent or shifted on its website. Check the list and confirm the correct procedure with your BLO if you are unsure which form applies.
Where else can I apply?
Until October 12, offline, with the Electoral Registration Officer, the Assistant Electoral Registration Officer, your BLO or at designated polling stations. Or online, through the Election Commission's "Voters' Service Portal" (https://voters.eci.gov.in/) or the ECINET mobile app.
For help, voters can call the election helpline on 1950. The CEO's website also provides SIR instructions and constituency-wise helpdesk details. If the online form or name-search facility does not work, approach the BLO or the relevant election office instead of assuming that you are ineligible.
What about students?
Special voter-registration camps are being held in colleges and universities across Maharashtra from October 5 to 9. BLOs are helping students fill applications and answering questions about the SIR, officials said.
Eligible students whose names are missing from the draft roll can seek inclusion through the prescribed application procedure. The qualifying date for this revision is October 1, 2026.

What BJP plans to achieve with its 3-day tribal outreach in Gujarat

Programme comes months after party suffered setbacks in Narmada, Bharuch and Chhota Udepur districts in the local body polls



Ahmedabad. (Agency)
The BJP is preparing a 72-hour outreach across Gujarat's 27 Scheduled Tribe (ST)-reserved Assembly constituencies after Dussehra, with MPs, MLAs and ministers set to camp in villages, hold gram sabhas and visit schools and Anganwadis.The exercise is aimed at taking the party's development pitch directly to tribal voters, while giving leaders a closer look at local concerns and organisational gaps. A "confidential" booklet circulated by the party lays out itineraries covering every taluka in the tribal constituencies. The mandate is to saturate the tribal belt, popularly known as the "Poorvi Patti", stretching from Ambaji in the north to Umargam in the south, with the BJP's "Viksit Bharat" narrative and counter the Opposition.
The Congress held sway over much of the belt until 2017, when it won 17 of the 27 ST seats. Its ally, the Bharatiya Tribal Party (BTP), won two and the BJP eight. In 2022, however, the BJP won 23 seats, reducing the Congress to three, while the AAP won one. The AAP made its entry into the belt when Chaitar Vasava won Dediapada in Narmada district by a landslide in his electoral debut. All four ST-reserved Lok Sabha seats in Gujarat are currently held by the BJP. The outreach comes amid continuing questions over implementation of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), land rights and tribal identity.The proposed Gujarat Uniform Civil Code (UCC), expected to be implemented before the 2027 election, excludes STs as well as persons and groups whose customary rights are protected under Part XXI of the Constitution. The debate, however, has continued to fuel wider concerns over customary rights and tribal identity. "Our MLAs, MPs and ministers will spend 72 hours in their respective areas, covering every taluka and staying overnight in villages," Mansukh Vasava, BJP MP from Bharuch, told The Indian Express. "From encouraging children at Anganwadis to explaining the benefits of the Pradhan Mantri Kusum Yojana, solar power and the establishment of tribal universities, the focus is on showcasing our work."
Vasava, a seven-term MP, said the exercise would also help identify organisational weaknesses. "Good work has been done, and the party is absolutely strong. But there are shortcomings on the part of people like us, the organisational workers, and opponents have taken advantage of them. This programme will give us an insight. Whatever needs to be corrected, we will do it," he said.

Organisational concerns

The BJP's organisational concerns were visible in Narmada district earlier this year, when Nandod MLA Darshana Deshmukh had a public spat with district leaders and sat on a dharna in June. Vasava backed her. The BJP has since replaced the Narmada district unit chief.
A senior BJP leader associated with the party's Tribal Morcha said the exercise would allow leaders to assess issues that may not emerge during conventional political programmes.

A voice for farmers, a mentor to many, Nana Patekar leaves a remarkable legacy

For many who had been there since the afternoon, the absence of "Nanaji" was deeply felt. The loss was equally profound for his colleagues, friends, farmers he had supported and fans who had admired him for decades.

Pune. (Agency)
As hundreds of people gathered at Nana Patekar's farmhouse on the outskirts of Pune to pay their last respects, a deep sense of grief hung over the venue. For many who had been there since the afternoon, the absence of "Nanaji" was deeply felt. The loss was equally profound for his colleagues, friends, farmers he had supported and fans who had admired him for decades. Actor Pravin Tarde, who was among those present, spoke about Patekar's contribution to farmers and Maharashtra. "Everyone dies, but he passed away at a difficult time, especially when farmers need him during this drought year. His movies will be talked about for centuries, but what he did to help farmers was



equally important. He showed that the green carpet of farmers is more important than the red carpet of Bollywood," Tarde said. He said Patekar's work would continue through the Naam Foundation, but his personal presence would be difficult to replace. The Naam Foundation, a movement spearheaded by Patekar and Marathi actor Makarand Anaspure in September 2015, was established in response to drought conditions in Maharashtra and the plight of farmers. Kiran Yadnyopavit, who co-wrote the screenplay for Natsamrat, also remembered Patekar's concern for farmers.
"It is a very sad loss for everyone, especially for farmers. Whenever we met, he would always discuss schemes and ideas to further help farmers," he said.

A mentor beyond the screen

For many who knew Patekar, his influence extended beyond his films. Neha, 25, a national-level shooter who had been close to Patekar, recalled meeting him when she was young. Patekar was himself an avid shooter and had won a silver medal at a national-level competition in 2004. "He was very surprised to see someone so young and small handling big guns. He used to call me 'chimni' (sparrow) because of this. He was a really good mentor and always helped me during my nationals," she said.

Women's safety in focus as CJP stages 'Chappal protest' in Bengaluru



BENGALURU. (Agency)
A Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) employee with 28 years of service said she had interacted with hundreds of women during her career and most had faced safety concerns, speaking at the 'Chappal protest' organised by the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) at Freedom Park on Thursday. The protest was staged condemning crimes against women and demanding safety and appropriate action. Several women shared accounts of domestic and gender-based violence and instances of being subjected to misbehaviour. BMTC conductor Kusuma said, "In my years of experience as a conductor, I have heard hundreds of women talk about their safety issues. Every government knows the problem and asking women to stay indoors after a certain time is not the solution. There has to be stricter punishments for the offenders here."
Vandhana Suri, founder of Taxshe, a women's cab organisation operating in Bengaluru and Delhi-NCR, questioned the lack of action by governments. "We brought the issues here because the governments haven't done anything. The SOS button in the cabs is useless. Why need chappal and me here? What is the government doing?" she said. Pushpa Rani, a domestic worker, speaking about alleged misbehaviour by employers at the homes where they work, said, "Misbehaving with us is not okay, please don't do it. We are not there to engage in your demands. We are working only to earn."Women at the protest also demanded that identity cards be provided to domestic workers and that Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) centres be established across the city. They demanded the right to live safely and exercise their rights without fear. CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke, co-convener Ashutosh Ranka and spokesperson Saurav Das joined the protest and expressed solidarity with the women.

Put on notice for 2,000 single-teacher schools, Gujarat officials reply: 'Don't have power to transfer'

In the notice issued to District Primary Education Officers and Administrative Officers, the department accused them of "administrative failure, laziness and dereliction of duty" and warned of disciplinary action

Ahmedabad. (Agency)
The Union Ministry of Education's Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) report 2025-26, released earlier this year, flagged that 2,335 schools in Gujarat were running with just one teacher. In August, the Gujarat education department sent notices to the District Primary Education Officers (DPEOs) and Administrative Officers (AOs), holding them accountable for not filling teacher posts and accusing them of "administrative failure, laziness and dereliction of duty".
The officials have replied to notice stating that they "do not have powers to transfer or even replace a teacher", which they said, made it impossible for them to correct the situation in the schools under them.

Notice cites 'inaction'

After the UDISE+ report was released, the Director of Primary Education (DPE) issued the notices under the Right to Education Act and under the Gujarat Civil Services Rules to all DPEOs and AOs across the state. The notices even warned of taking disciplinary actions against erring officials such as curtailing their increments, citing "serious legal, constitutional and



administrative lapses".
Sources told The Indian Express that the DPEOs in their responses submitted that "they do not have administrative powers to internally transfer or replace a teacher".
"This is the response most of the DPEOs submitted against the show cause notices that were issued citing several rules. It is for the state government to take these measures and not the DPEOs who are not vested with any of these powers," a DPEO, who was also served with the notice, told The Indian Express on the condition of anonymity. The notice described the DPEO's "inaction" as a violation of constitutional provisions ensuring the Right to Free and Compulsory Education and the 'Gujarat Civil Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1971'. "As per the provisions of Section 25(1) of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE Act), 2009 and its Schedule, it is mandatory to maintain a specified Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) in every primary school. Under the provisions of the Act, no school can be maintained as a single-teacher school," the notice said.

CM Vijay announces Dream Olympics 2036 scheme as Tamil Nadu set for sports facelift

New Delhi. (Agency)
Tamil Nadu, under the leadership of Chief Minister Vijay, has launched an ambitious initiative, titled Dream Olympics 2036, to identify and nurture athletes capable of winning medals at the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The programme was announced on Thursday at a felicitation ceremony for Asian Games medallists from the state at The Leela Palace in Chennai. This is in continuation with Vijay's encouragement to the athletes who per A statewide talent identification drive for children aged between eight and 18 will form the foundation of the initiative. The objective is to identify promising athletes in every district



and integrate them into a structured sports development system.
The state has proposed setting up 10 Olympic training centres to support the development of identified talent. A flagship Olympic city is also planned to provide athletes with access to high-performance training facilities and prepare them for elite-level competition.
"The stadiums that were built during J. Jayalalithaa's time are very old. We need to build good infrastructure and rehabilitation centres. There is no centre for physically challenged sportspersons. Our priority is to build a sound ecosystem around sportspersons. With that in mind, we have increased the sports budget.

Chief selector Ajit Agarkar's report card: Was the present unkind to him?

New Delhi. (Agency)
The words on Rohit Sharma's T-shirt were difficult to miss: "Non-committal?" The former India captain was promoting his latest television show when the shirt caught the internet's attention in September, and the reaction was swift. Fans linked it to the debate over his place in the 2027 ODI World Cup and to comments widely attributed to Ajit Agarkar, who had been at the centre of discussions around the futures of Rohit and Virat Kohli. Some read it as a pointed reply to the chief selector. There was, however, no confirmation from Rohit that it was meant as a dig at Agarkar, nor any evidence that he had privately told Agarkar he was non-committal about the World Cup. Whether he intended it that way is almost beside the point. The online narrative had already taken shape, and a T-shirt was all it needed to spring back to life. It was a neat illustration of what Agarkar's three years as chief selector had become. A decision would be made, a player's future would turn into a talking point, and Agarkar would find himself at the



centre of the argument. Sometimes the criticism was about the cricket, sometimes about the way a decision was perceived, and often the two were impossible to separate.
Agarkar's tenure ended on October 4, 2026, with three ICC titles to his name: the 2024 T20 World Cup, the 2025 Champions Trophy and the 2026 T20 World Cup. India also reached the final of the 2023 ODI World Cup. These are not small achievements for a selection committee to have overseen. Yet when Gautam Gambhir wrote that "history will be kinder" to Agarkar, it was that line that stood out. Why would history need to be kinder to a selector whose tenure had delivered so much? Was the present really unkind to him? Senior Managing Editor and Head of SportsTak Vikrant Gupta does not quite buy the premise.

NZ vs IND: New Zealand hit by double injury blow ahead of India T20I series

New Zealand will begin the India T20I series without Mark Chapman and Zak Foulkes after the duo suffered injuries. New Zealand have brought in replacements, Blair Tickner and Josh Clarkson.

New Delhi. (Agency)
New Zealand have suffered two injury setbacks ahead of their five-match T20I series against India, with Mark Chapman and Zak Foulkes ruled out of the upcoming contest. New Zealand Cricket (NZC) confirmed on Friday that the pair would miss the series after sustaining hamstring and hip flexor injuries, respectively. Chapman tore his left hamstring while playing in the inaugural edition of the European T20 Premier League (ETPL). While the injury has ruled him out of the T20I assignments against India, the batter is expected to be available for the subsequent five-match ODI series. Foulkes, meanwhile, sustained an injury to his right hip flexor during a training session with Canterbury. His recovery timeline remains uncertain, with New Zealand Cricket yet to determine when the pacer could return to action. The Black Caps have named all-rounder Josh Clarkson and fast bowler Blair Tickner as replacements for the injured duo. New Zealand head coach Rob Walter expressed his satisfaction at having the two players back in the squad ahead of the challenging assignment against India.



"I'm gutted for Mark and Zak and I wish them both a smooth recovery," said Walter. "We're fortunate to be able to lean on the expertise of Josh and Blair. I know they're both very excited to be involved in what's shaping up to be an epic T20 series." The T20I series begins on October 22 and promises to be an exciting contest, with the two sides renewing their rivalry after facing each other in the final of the T20 World Cup earlier this year. India emerged victorious in that summit clash and will look to carry their momentum into the upcoming tour. Mitchell Santner will captain the New Zealand side, which features a mix of established players and emerging talent. Opening batters Tim Seifert and Finn Allen will be among the players to watch, having shown encouraging form in recent outings. The five T20Is will be held across Christchurch, Wellington, Auckland and Hamilton. The teams will then compete in five ODIs and two Test matches, making the Indian team's upcoming New Zealand tour an extended assignment spanning more than a month.

UPDATED NEW ZEALAND SQUAD FOR INDIA T20IS

Mitchell Santner (C), Finn Allen, Michael Bracewell, Josh Clarkson, Devon Conway, Jacob Duffy, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Bevon Jacobs, Kyle Jamieson, Adam Milne, Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips, Tim Seifert, Nathan Smith, Blair Tickner.

Tell your story: Pat Cummins unfazed by Sandpaper gate revelations in Khawaja's book

Pat Cummins says Usman Khawaja is free to tell his story and is unfazed about the prospect of having new sandpaper gate revelations coming to light in the former Australia opener's autobiography.

New Delhi. (Agency)
Australia captain Pat Cummins is unfazed about the potential revelations about the Sandpapergate scandal in Usman Khawaja's book, insisting that his side has moved on from the scandal. Australia are set to face South Africa in South Africa in a Test series for the first time since the scandal in 2018.
Khawaja's autobiography, Sabr, is scheduled to hit the shelves on November 10, following the end of Australia's three-Test tour of South Africa. According to a report by Code Sports, the former Australia opener has already discussed the book's contents with Cummins, although the details remain under wraps.
Cummins acknowledged that he had discussed the autobiography and its contents with Khawaja, but said he wasn't bothered by the possibility of fresh details emerging about the ball-tampering scandal. The Australia captain added that he had already addressed questions on the controversy countless times over the past eight-and-a-half years. "Yeah, Uz gave me a buzz a few weeks back, [saying] that he's releasing a book," said Cummins at the pre-match press conference. "He didn't go back into too much detail. He just basically gave me a heads-up that he's doing a book. As always, [my response was], 'No worries, you can tell your story. That's fine.'"

'AUSTRALIA HAVE MOVED ON'

Cummins and Khawaja were both part of Australia's squad for the controversial Cape Town Test in 2018, where television cameras captured Cameron Bancroft using sandpaper on the ball.
The scandal led to Steven Smith stepping down as captain and David Warner relinquishing the vice-captaincy. Cricket Australia subsequently handed lengthy suspensions to Smith, Warner and Bancroft for their roles in an incident that damaged the sport's reputation. When pressed about his conversation with Khawaja and the book,



Cummins said that the best person to answer would be the former Aussie opener. "I'm not too sure. You'll need to ask him. It was obviously a long time ago. All the investigations and everything was done back then. I answered every question a million times. It was dealt with then.""All I can say is [that] as a group, we've moved on. [I am] very happy with the last eight or nine years, how we've been as a group and evolved, and obviously my focus is on captaining the cricket team," said Cummins.
The sandpaper gate has dominated the headlines going into the series, with South African broadcaster Supersport stoking the fire by releasing the full video of the incident on social media.

Hockey India elections set for December 5 amid in-fighting, row over state polls

New Delhi. (Agency)
Hockey India will elect its new office-bearers for the 2026-2030 term on December 5, with the federation officially kicking off the process. The elections will be held against the backdrop of the infighting going on within the federation and growing dispute over the validity of the member-unit polls and voting rights across several states. As part of the election process, newly-appointed HI electoral officer, Sudhir Tripathi, has directed all permanent



member units to put forward one male and one female nominee for the federation's electoral college by October 15. The publication of the final electoral roll has been set for November 15. The filing of the nominations will take place between November 22 to 24, with the draft nominations being announced on November 24. Following this, objections, if any, to the draft nominations will be reviewed before the final nominations list will be announced on December 1. The withdrawal of nominations will be possible on the following day, before the final list of the participants will be announced on December 3. If the polls are necessary, then they will take place on December 5 and the result will come out on the same day. The move comes amid growing scrutiny of electoral procedures and the composition of electoral colleges across several state hockey associations, according to a report from Times Of India. Documents reviewed by TOI point to complaints, objections to elections and appeals for intervention in states including Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Assam.Stakeholders have raised concerns over the conduct of elections, the eligibility of representatives and adherence to the National Sports Governance Act, 2025.

8 years on from Sandpapergate, Australia chase redemption in South Africa Tests

Australia return to South Africa for the first time since the 2018 Sandpapergate scandal, with the top two WTC sides set for a high-stakes three-Test series. South Africa will begin their homecoming as world champions, while Australia eye redemption after their defeat in last year's WTC final.

New Delhi. (Agency)
Eight years after one of the darkest episodes in Australian cricket, the rivalry with South Africa returns to the Test arena with the stakes higher than ever. Australia begin a three-Test series in Durban on Friday, October 9, their first Test tour of South Africa since the infamous 2018 Sandpapergate



series. But this is no longer simply about settling old scores. The series brings together the top two teams in the current World Test Championship (WTC) standings, while also reprising last year's WTC final, where South Africa beat Australia by five wickets at Lord's. A year later, the Australians have an opportunity to strike back on South African soil. The 2018 tour remains impossible to ignore. Steve Smith, David Warner and Cameron Bancroft were suspended after Australia were caught using sandpaper to illegally alter the ball. The scandal led to bans, resignations and a lasting stain on Australian cricket.
Eight years later, only a handful of players from that era remain. Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood, Mitchell Starc, Smith and Matthew Renshaw are the members of Australia's current touring group who were also part of the 2018 party.

IND vs WI, 2nd T20I: Ishan Kishan returns home with Ranchi ready for a spectacle

IND vs WI 2nd T20I Preview: Ishan Kishan's Ranchi homecoming adds intrigue to the second T20I as India look to extend their lead against West Indies, who must find answers to India's spin attack and overcome challenging dew and weather conditions.

New Delhi. (Agency)
Ishan Kishan returns to Ranchi on Friday, but this time the welcome will be different. The Jharkhand star will walk out at the JSCA Stadium as part of India's T20I setup, with a packed home crowd waiting to see him back on familiar ground as India take on West Indies in the second game of the series. India arrive with a 1-0 lead after making short work of the visitors in the opener. Shreyas Iyer's unbeaten 102



powered a 172-run chase in just 14.4 overs, while India's spinners exposed West Indies' vulnerability in the middle overs. Now, with dew expected to influence the evening conditions, the visitors have to find a response quickly. Kishan's homecoming adds an intriguing subplot to a game where India will be looking to extend their winning run and West Indies will be desperate to avoid falling further behind.

INDIA HOLD ALL THE ACES

India's biggest advantage is the number of ways they can hurt West Indies. The opening game was not just about Shreyas Iyer's unbeaten 102; India also chased 172 with 32 balls to spare, underlining the depth and tempo available across their batting order. Abhishek Sharma and Sanju Samson can put pressure on the new-ball attack, while Ishan Kishan, Tilak Varma and Shivam Dube give India plenty of power through the middle. That batting depth means West Indies cannot afford to relax even after making early breakthroughs.
With the ball, India's spinners dictated the middle overs in the opener, forcing West Indies into mistakes and eventually bowling them out for 171. Ranchi's conditions could make that battle particularly interesting, especially if the surface offers some grip before dew takes over later in the evening.



'I Just Want Two Healthy Babies'

Kiara Advani's

Old Comment Goes Viral After 2nd Pregnancy Announcement

On October 7, Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra recently shared the happy news that they are expecting their second child. Soon after the announcement, an old video of Kiara discussing motherhood resurfaced on social media. In the interview with Bollywood Hungama, conducted during the promotions of Good Newwz, the actress was asked what combination of twins she would want. She replied that she would simply want “two healthy babies" and later said she would love to have one boy and one girl.

When Kiara Advani spoke about having two babies

In the old interview, Kiara Advani was asked what combination she would prefer if she were to have twins — two girls, two boys, or a boy and a girl. To this, she replied, “I just want two healthy babies that God can gift me." Kareena Kapoor Khan, who was



part of the interview, joked that her answer sounded like a Miss Universe response. She said, “And the crown goes to you." Kiara then added that she would love to have a girl and a boy.Later, when the interviewer asked what qualities of Kareena Kapoor she would want in her daughter, Kiara replied, “Her confidence, her expressions, her aura. All her qualities. She is a 10 on 10.”

Meanwhile, Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra, who welcomed their daughter Saraayah Malhotra last year, are now expecting their second child. The couple announced the news on Instagram through a joint post featuring their daughter’s hands holding a tiny pair of baby socks. They captioned it, “Blessed once again with the greatest gift of all. Our hearts are so full of love and gratitude."

Sidharth and Kiara tied the knot on February 7, 2023, in an intimate and picturesque ceremony at Suryagarh Palace in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.

Saiyami Kher

Completes 10 Years In Bollywood: 'I Have A Long Way To Go’

Saiyami Kher has completed a decade in the film industry. As she marks 10 years since her acting debut, the actress looked back at a journey shaped not just by the films she has worked on, but also by the people she met, the lessons she learnt and the experiences that changed her personally and professionally.

Saiyami made her acting debut with Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra’s Mirzya in 2016, opposite Harshvardhan Kapoor. Reflecting on her journey, she recalled being a reserved, introverted young woman from Nashik with little exposure to the film industry, who was often written off even before she had begun.

“A decade since I walked onto a film set for the first time. A decade of some of the most life-altering experiences of my life. I was a reserved, introverted 20-something girl from Nashik with barely any exposure to films. I was written off before I had even begun. I was told I was a ‘villager’, that I didn’t have it in me," Saiyami wrote in an Instagram post on Wednesday.

She also recalled receiving unsolicited advice, including being told to date an actor or director to find an easier entry into the industry and to undergo cosmetic procedures. However, she credited her upbringing and parents for giving her the confidence to deal with such experiences.

“My upbringing and my parents had given me enough security in myself to find humour in grown adults speaking to me like that. I met a whole lot of people with free advice, and rejection pretty much every day," she said.

A turning point came when Adoor Mukerji called her and told her that filmmaker Dilip Shankar would test her. Saiyami subsequently spent three months workshopping with Shankar and actor Adil Hussain. “Dilip ji’s warmth and gentleness made me realise that good people exist. I spent three months workshopping with him and Adil Hussain, and those three months changed me completely. They taught me to be myself, find



truth and honesty in my work, and trust that being myself was enough. Six months later, I was locked for Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra’s Mirzya," she recalled.Looking back at Mirzya, Saiyami described Mehra as someone who gave her exactly what she had unknowingly been seeking. “Rakeysh sir was everything I had unknowingly been seeking. A beautiful human being and a dream to work with. He and Bharat ma’am pampered me like I was their own child. Sir completely spoilt me on set. He gave me the freedom to be myself, made me fall in love with acting and taught me little life lessons .



Nana Patekar Death: Veteran Actor’s Last Rites To Take Place In Pune With Full State Honours



Nana Patekar Death: Veteran actor Nana Patekar passed away in the early hours of October 8, following a cardiac arrest. Details about Nana Patekar’s last rites have come in. The actor’s final rites will take place with full state honours at his own farmhouse in Pune and not in Mumbai.As per the update, Nana Patekar’s final rites will take place at his farmhouse in Pune’s Donje area today at 4 pm, and he will be given full state honours, honouring his contribution to cinema and beyond.

Patekar was found unconscious upon the arrival of the medical team and was administered cardiac massage at the spot before being rushed to a private hospital in Dona Paula. On October 8, early in the morning at 5:20 AM, the medical team at the hospital declared the veteran actor dead.“Despite 45 minutes of continuous CPR, he could not be revived. A medico-legal case (MLC) has been registered, and a post-mortem will be conducted," Dr Shekhar Salkar said, who is the chief of the Oncology Department at Manipal Hospital.

Nana Patekar was last seen in Vishal Bhardwaj’s romantic action thriller O’Romeo. Earlier, he was seen in Housefull 5 (2025) and Vanvaas (2024). Patekar also made his OTT debut in 2026 with Prakash Jha’s political drama series Sankalp, in which he played the central character of Ma’at Sahab/Kanhaiya Lal.

Who Was Nana Patekar?

Nana Patekar, born Vishwanath Patekar, began his acting career with Gaman in 1978 and went on to establish himself as one of Hindi and Marathi cinema’s most distinctive performers. His breakthrough came with films such as Ankush, Pratighaat, Salaam Bombay! and Parinda. He delivered acclaimed performances in Prahaar: The Final Attack, Angaar, Tirangaa, Krantiveer, Agni Sakshi, Khamoshi: The Musical, Ab Tak Chhappan, Apaharan and Raajneeti. He also became hugely popular with audiences for playing Uday Shetty in Welcome and Welcome Back. Over his career, he won three National Film Awards and was awarded the Padma Shri in 2013.

Kriti Sanon Viral Raksha Bandhan Ad: Actress Says Her Choli Became Prime-Time Debate: 'I Couldn’t Believe’



Kriti Sanon has spoken about the backlash over her Raksha Bandhan advertisement, revealing that she never expected her outfit to become a subject of prime-time television debates. The actress discussed the controversy on Kareena Kapoor Khan’s What Women Want Season 6 and recalled how much attention her “choli" received.Speaking to Kareena, Kriti said, “I couldn’t believe… when my choli had become like a 6 people panel discussion on prime-time news." Kareena reacted, “I know.”

Kriti Sanon on her Raksha Bandhan ad controversy

The controversy began after GIVA released its Raksha Bandhan advertisement featuring Kriti Sanon. In the ad, she wears an Indo-Western outfit while celebrating Raksha Bandhan by tying a Rakhi to her brother and her pet dog.

Some social media users slammed Kriti’s outfit and said it was inappropriate for a traditional festival. Others questioned the way Raksha Bandhan was presented in the advertisement, including the absence of traditional elements and the inclusion of her pet.

Kriti had reacted to the backlash on Instagram and questioned why women are still judged by their clothes. She wrote, “Also, when will we stop telling women what to wear? Ethnic fashion has evolved over the years, yet a woman’s respect for her culture is still measured by her clothes. Culture and traditions are in her heart, not in her neckline!"

Kriti continued the conversation on women and clothing

Kriti later shared more posts about women, clothing and patriarchy. One of the posts she reshared read, “Guys, it’s not Men vs Women," while criticising patriarchal and misogynistic attitudes.

Raja Krishnamoorthi honours pilot Smit Machchhar for saving 172 on Flydubai

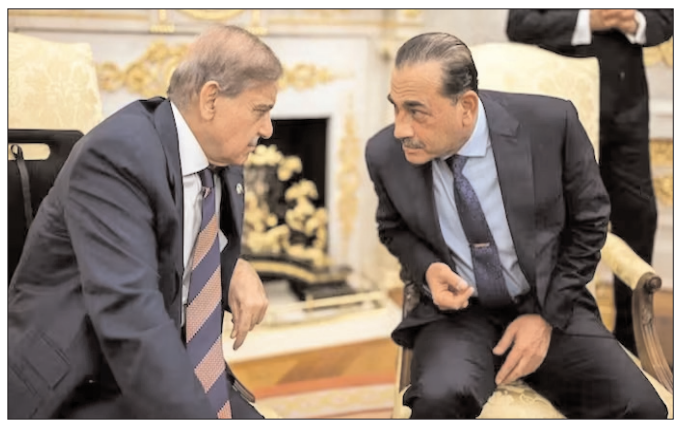
Washington. (Agency)
US Congressman
Raja Krishnamoorthi on Friday honoured Indian pilot Smit Machchhar for what he described as extraordinary bravery aboard Flydubai Flight 1073, saying the captain's actions helped save 172 passengers and crew members. Machchhar was seriously injured after being attacked in the cockpit by his co-pilot while the flight was travelling from Dubai to Tel Aviv on September 30.
Krishnamoorthi, a Democratic Congressman from Illinois, submitted a statement to the US Congressional Record on the incident. He said there were four US citizens and 27 children among those on board, and said the flight was eventually landed safely in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia, after two reserve Flydubai pilots travelling on the aircraft took control.
In his statement, Krishnamoorthi said, "After being attacked by the flight's first officer, who attempted to seize control of the aircraft, Captain Machchhar's actions helped save the lives of 172 passengers and his fellow crew members." He also described Machchhar as "a husband, father, and pilot with 17 years of flying experience, including 11 as a captain". Krishnamoorthi said that when the first officer attacked Machchhar, the aircraft plunged about 16,000 feet in around 30 seconds. "Despite grave injuries, Captain Machchhar fought his way to the cockpit door and opened it, allowing passengers and crew members to enter and overpower his attacker. Two reserve Flydubai pilots travelling aboard the aircraft then took control and landed it safely in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia," he said.
He said Machchhar understood that the lives of everyone on board depended on what he did next. "Despite his injuries, his years of experience told him that the aircraft was going down, and he found the strength to reach that door. His presence of mind, determination, and courage gave the passengers and crew the chance they needed to stop the attack and avert a catastrophe," Krishnamoorthi said.

Jayapal slams Trump move suspending Microsoft green card route

Washington. (Agency)
Democratic lawmaker Pramila Jayapal has criticised the Trump administration's decision to suspend the green card pathway for Microsoft and seven other IT firms, saying the move amounts to taking "a hammer to legal immigration". The administration has argued that the programme has kept Americans out of the job market.
The decision triggered a political exchange, with Jayapal defending Microsoft and the Permanent Labor Certification Program, or PERM, as part of the legal immigration system, and Vice President J D Vance accusing major technology companies and outsourcing firms of seeking a steady supply of cheap labour at the cost of American workers.
On Thursday, the Trump administration suspended eight IT firms, including Microsoft, Tata, Infosys and Wipro, from the programme used to apply for green cards for foreign workers. Vance announced the suspension, alleging that major technology firms and outsourcing companies had abused the visa system at the expense of American workers. Jayapal, a progressive Democrat from Washington state, where Microsoft is headquartered in Redmond, said the company had been a leader in advocating comprehensive immigration reform. She said the Trump administration had been "consistently working to take away legal pathways for immigrants to contribute their talents to our country, and this is yet another of those attacks". "You don't fix a broken immigration system by taking a hammer to legal immigration," Jayapal said. She added that Microsoft had pushed for reforms that modernise "an antiquated immigration system" and create more, not fewer, legal pathways for immigrants from around the world to work in the United States and live with their families. She said the PERM programme is the first step towards an employment-based green card for many workers who want to contribute to the country, and that it sets out a clear process to ensure it benefits the economy and does not harm American jobs.

India mocks Pak's Shehbaz Sharif regime as 'Form 47 govt'. What does it mean?

Pakistan: The term 'Form 47 government' has been frequently used by Imran Khan's party to accuse the Shehbaz Sharif regime of manipulating the 2024 Pakistan election results. India used it to take a swipe at Pakistan at the UNGA.



World . (Agency)
India launched a sharp attack on Pakistan at the United Nations, calling the Shehbaz Sharif regime a "Form 47 government" and accusing Islamabad of creating "Frankensteins" that it has now lost control of. The term 'Form 47 government' has been frequently used by Imran Khan's party to question the legitimacy of the Sharif-led coalition, which came to power in 2024.
"Nothing more can be expected from a Form 47 government," India's first secretary Raghoo Puri said at a UNGA session, accusing Pakistan of putting its energy into "narrative building" and spreading misinformation instead of fighting terrorism. "If efforts had been made in countering terrorism, the world would have been a better place," Puri said.

WHAT INDIA SAID ON PAKISTAN AT UNGA?

Showing the mirror to Pakistan on terrorism, the Indian diplomat said Islamabad was now facing a damning reality. Puri underlined that the terror networks Pakistan once nurtured had now come back to haunt it. "Pakistan casts itself as a frontline state and a victim, masking the fact that the Frankensteins it created and lost control over have moved from wreaking havoc in neighbouring countries to doing the same at home," he said. Puri said the "dark secret" was acknowledged by Pakistan's own leaders. The Indian diplomat likely hinted at startling remarks made by Punjab chief minister Maryam Nawaz last month in Lahore.
Maryam, the daughter of former PM Nawaz Sharif, said her province faced a bigger threat from neighbouring Pakistani provinces than from neighbouring countries. "You can't run with the hares and hunt with the hounds," the Indian diplomat said. However, what grabbed attention was Puri's reference to the Sharif regime as a 'Form 47 government'. What is Form 47, and why is the current regime called a 'Form 47 government'?

10 dead, 16 injured as prison riot rocks Mexico for second time in a week

A prison riot in Sinaloa left nine inmates and a visitor dead, with 16 prisoners injured. The violence came as another prison in Ciudad Victoria saw a deadly shootout that renewed scrutiny of chronic jail failures.

World . (Agency)
A prison riot in Mexico's violence-plagued state of Sinaloa left nine prisoners and one visitor dead on Thursday, the state's security office said. The incident also injured 16 inmates, while authorities brought the prison under control. Prosecutors will investigate the cause of the violence, the security office said in a statement.
The incident comes amid a history of deadly prison violence in Mexico. In a separate incident at a prison in Ciudad Victoria, the capital of the border state of Tamaulipas, continuous automatic gunfire erupted late Tuesday and continued into Wednesday morning. Authorities reported that they had regained control of the facility by late morning.
The state security spokesman's office said three police officers and four inmates died in the shootouts, while six police officers and seven prisoners sustained injuries. Inmates at the state prison had somehow obtained firearms and began fighting authorities. Mexico's National Human Rights Commission said on Wednesday that it had sent a delegation to the prison to document the incident and check the health of inmates. The commission said it had audited the facility in 2016 and identified several problems, including overcrowding, inadequate supervision, insufficient personnel, poor health services and conditions in which inmates exercised self-government.



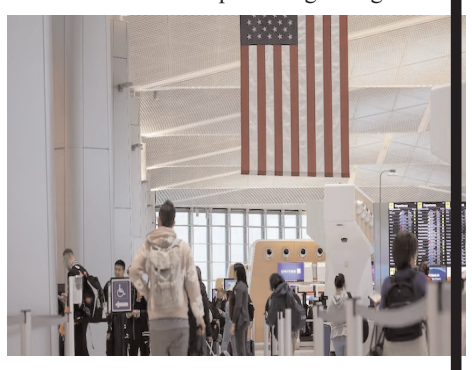
The Ciudad Victoria prison has repeatedly witnessed shootings, the smuggling of firearms, riots and escapes. The city has long been dominated by the Zetas drug cartel, known for its extreme violence.
In March, a fight between prisoners at the same facility left three inmates dead. That clash followed a riot and a mass escape through a tunnel that inmates had built in a prison yard. Authorities have since recaptured most of the escapees.Inmates have frequently had access to firearms inside the prison. During the March escape, at least one prisoner carried a gun and used it to kill a passing motorist during a carjacking. Police later recovered two assault rifles buried in a planter inside the prison.

What's next for Infosys, TCS, Wipro's Indian talent? US Green Card freeze impact explained

World . (Agency)
The Donald Trump administration has suspended several major India-based IT companies, including Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, Wipro and HCL, as well as Cognizant and Capgemini and US tech giants Microsoft and Adobe, from its Permanent Labour Certification (PERM) programme which is a crucial step in the employer-sponsored Green Card process. The US Department of Labour said it would not accept new or process pending permanent labour certifications involving the affected companies, alleging that these firms had abused the system to hire foreign workers at the expense of American workers.
The biggest fallout from the suspension of the

The US has suspended major Indian IT firms and other tech companies from the PERM programme. The biggest fallout from the suspension of the Green Card programme may not be felt immediately. Here is all you need to know.

Green Card programme may not be felt immediately. It could come when Indian IT companies decide whether sponsoring foreign work



ers for permanent residency is still worth the uncertainty. Immigration attorney Geeta Darubra of Alma Immigration told India Today Digital that continued uncertainty around the PERM programme could push companies to sponsor fewer Green Cards or hire more US workers, which is the ultimate goal of the White House. Indian H-1B workers, who already face lengthy waits for employment-based immigration amid the Trump administration's immigration crackdown and rising visa fees, could find it even harder to pursue the American dream.
"If this trend continues, companies may place more emphasis on compliance, hire US workers and use alternative visa categories such as the L-1A," Darubra said. She said the broader impact on Indian professionals could be significant if scrutiny extends further. Indian H-1B workers may become more reluctant to settle in the US amid uncertainty over immigration policy and existing backlogs in the EB-2 and EB-3 categories.

Kashmiri filmmaker freed after 2 weeks in ICE custody, had sought asylum in US

World . (Agency)
Award-winning Kashmiri filmmaker Arfat Sheikh was released from US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention on bond on Thursday after being detained on September 24, according to a statement by a campaign of his friends and relatives to free him.
Sheikh, whose work has explored conflict in his native Jammu and Kashmir, was detained by ICE, part of the Department of Homeland Security, while coming off a plane from California at the Washington Dulles International Airport, the campaign said.
It said Sheikh's bond was granted on Tuesday and he was released on Thursday, adding that the deportation case against him continues. The campaign said Sheikh, who lived in Alexandria, Virginia, entered the US in 2019 on a student visa to pursue graduate studies in film at Georgia State University and filed for asylum in 2020. The campaign said he had a pending immigration application and was authorised to work and live in the US. DHS said on Wednesday Sheikh was arrested on September 24. It said Sheikh "legally entered the US on a temporary basis and illegally overstayed his lawful admittance." A pending application does not confer legal status in the US, DHS said, adding he will receive due process. President Donald Trump's administration said in August it was working "to identify and revoke the non-immigrant visas of foreigners who have come to the US claiming to be short-term visitors, but then file for asylum to stay here permanently."



Kashmiri filmmaker Arfat Sheikh was released on bond after two weeks in ICE detention. He went to the US on a student visa before applying for asylum in 2020.

Trump has pursued an immigration crackdown and deportation drive that he says aims to improve domestic security. Rights advocates say the crackdown has violated due process and free speech rights and created an unsafe environment, particularly for ethnic minorities, who have raised concerns about racial profiling. Sheikh's first feature film, 2024's "Saffron Kingdom," won Best Feature Film at the Chicago Filmmakers Awards, the LA Film and Documentary Awards, the Melbourne Independent Film Festival and the Wake Forest Film Festival. Sheikh, who hails from Jammu and Kashmir, won the Emerging Filmmaker Activist Award at the Teaneck International Film Festival. The film explored conflict in Kashmir through the journey of a family from Srinagar in the 1990s to Atlanta in 2019.

JD Vance calls H-1B visa hires indentured servants, accuses IT giants of abuse

After the Trump administration suspended Microsoft and several other IT firms from a key green card programme, US Vice President JD Vance accused these companies of abusing the H-1B visa system, terming foreign workers brought in by them "indentured servants".

World . (Agency)
US Vice President JD Vance has accused Microsoft of exploiting the H-1B visa programme to replace American workers with lower-paid foreign employees, using the phrase "indentured servants" to describe skilled workers brought into the country by outsourcing firms. The Trump administration has suspended Microsoft from a programme that allows employers to sponsor foreign workers for US permanent residency, amid allegations of fraud. "If you are working as an H-1B visa in the United States of America, you're earning $20,000 less than an American citizen hired in the same position. If you were brought in by one of these foreign outsourcing firms, you're making $48,000 less than an American citizen in a similar position," Vance said. He alleged that companies were using the system to cut labour costs while laying off American employees.
"You bring in indentured servants from outside the country, you lay off American workers and, if you're a corporation, you make a ton of money by undercutting the wages of American workers, replacing them with people who frankly shouldn't be in the United States of America to begin with," the Vice President said.

VANCE CITES MICROSOFT LAYOFFS



Vance singled out Microsoft, alleging that the technology giant had abused the H-1B system more than any other company in the US. He pointed to the company's workforce reductions in 2025, saying Microsoft laid off 6,000 American workers after certifying that it could not find qualified US employees for the positions.
At the same time, according to Vance, Microsoft approved for more than 6,000 H-1B visas and filed 3,682 applications for permanent labour certification, known as PERM. Nearly 1,000 of those applications were reportedly for positions matching jobs held by American workers who had been laid off. The allegations have placed fresh scrutiny on the employment practices of major technology companies that rely on foreign talent. Vance argued that the programme, originally intended to help employers recruit highly skilled workers for jobs that could not be filled by Americans, had become vulnerable to fraud and misuse.

MORE TECH FIRMS FACE ACTION

US Labour Secretary Keith Sonderling said Microsoft was not the only major technology company facing action. He announced the suspension of several other companies from the programme, including Cognizant, Infosys, Tata, Wipro, HCO, Capgemini and Adobe. Sonderling also announced investigations into nine universities, including Harvard,